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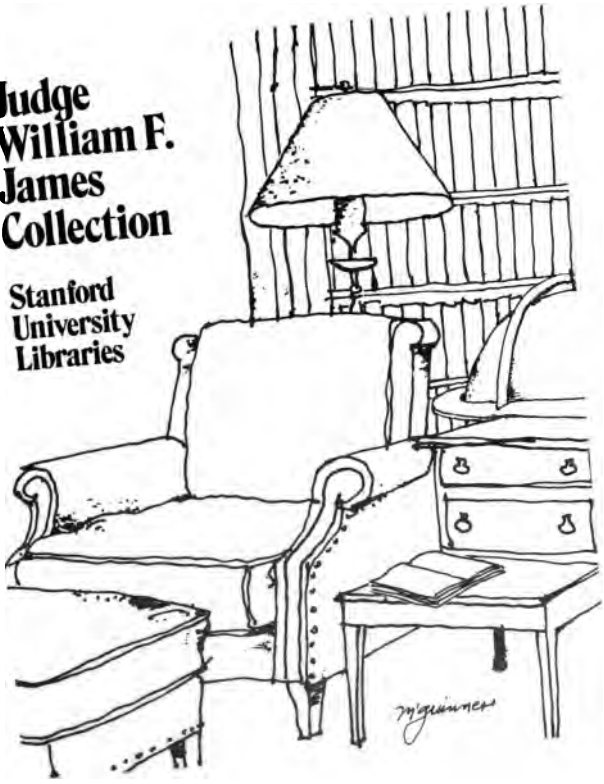

Roaring Camp Edition

THE WRITINGS OF

BRET HARTE

WITH INTRODUCTIONS, GLOSSARY, AND INDEXES

ILLUSTRATED

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IT WAS QUITE ROMANTIC TO SIT BY THE WINDOW

GABRIEL CONROY

ARGONAUT PAPERS AND FOR THE

BY

BRET HARTE

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

GABRIEL CONROY

BOHEMIAN PAPERS, STORIES OF AND FOR THE YOUNG

BY

BRET HARTE

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

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GABRIEL CONROY

BOOK VI

A DIP

CHAPTER I

MR. HAMLIN'S RECREATION CONTINUED

WHEN Doña Dolores after the departure of Mrs. Sepulvida missed the figure of Mr. Jack Hamlin from the plain before her window, she presumed he had followed that lady and would have been surprised to have known that he was at that moment within her castle, drinking aguardiente with no less a personage than the solemn Don Juan Salvatierra. In point of fact, with that easy audacity which distinguished him, Jack had penetrated the courtyard, gained the hospitality of Don Juan without even revealing his name and profession to that usually ceremonious gentleman, and after holding him in delicious fascination for two hours, had actually left him lamentably intoxicated, and utterly oblivious of the character of his guest. Why Jack did not follow up his advantage by seeking an interview with the mysterious señora who had touched him so deeply, I cannot say, nor could he himself afterwards determine. A sudden bashfulness and timidity which he had never before experienced in his relations with the sex tied his *own tongue,* while Don Juan, with the garrulity

which inebriety gave to his, poured forth the gossip of the mission and the household. It is possible also that a certain vague hopelessness, equally novel to Jack, sent him away in lower spirits than he came. It is not remarkable that Doña Dolores knew nothing of the visit of this guest until three days afterwards, for during that time she was indisposed and did not leave her room, but it *was* remarkable that on learning it she flew into a paroxysm of indignation and rage that alarmed Don Juan and frightened her attendants.

"And why was *I* not told of the presence of this strange Americano? Am I a child, holy St. Anthony! that I am to be kept in ignorance of my duty as the hostess of the Blessed Trinity, or are you, Don Juan, my dueña? A brave caballero, who, I surmise from your description, is the same that protected me from insult at Mass last Sunday, and he is not to 'kiss my hand'? Mother of God! And his name — you have forgotten?"

In vain Juan protested that the strange caballero had not requested an audience, and that a proper maidenly spirit would have prevented the doña from appearing, unsought.

"Better that I should have been thought forward — and these Americanos are of different habitude, my uncle — than that the Blessed Trinity should have been misrepresented by the guzzling of aguardiente!"

Howbeit, Mr. Hamlin had not found the climate of San Antonio conducive to that strict repose that his physician had recommended, and left it the next day with an accession of feverish energy that was new to him. He had idled away three days of excessive heat at Sacramento, and on the fourth had flown to the mountains and found himself on the morning of the first cool day at Wingdam.

"Anybody here I know?" he demanded of his faithful benchman, as Pete brought in his clothes, freshly brushed for the morning toilet.

"No, sah!"

"Nor want to, eh?" continued the cynical Jack, leisurely getting out of bed.

Pete reflected. "Dere is two o' dese yar Yeastern tourists — dem folks as is goin' round inspectin' de country — down in de parlor. Jess come over from de Big Trees. I reckon dey 's some o' de same party — dem 'Frisco chaps — Mars Dumphy and de odders haz been unloadin' to. Dey 's mighty green, and de boys along de road has been fillin' 'em up. It 's jess so much water on de dried apples dat Pete Dumphy 's been shovin' into 'em."

Jack smiled grimly. "I reckon you need n't bring up my breakfast, Pete, I 'll go down."

The party thus obscurely referred to by Pete were Mr. and Mrs. Raynor, who had been "doing" the Big Trees, under the intelligent guidance of a San Francisco editor, who had been deputized by Mr. Dumphy to represent Californian hospitality. They were exceedingly surprised during breakfast by the entrance of a pale, handsome, languid gentleman, accurately dressed, whose infinite neatness shamed their own bedraggled appearance, and who, accompanied by his own servant, advanced and quietly took a seat opposite the tourists and their guide. Mrs. Raynor at once became conscious of some negligence in her toilet, and after a moment's embarrassment excused herself and withdrew. Mr. Raynor, impressed with the appearance of the stranger, telegraphed his curiosity by elbowing the editor, who, however, for some reason best known to himself, failed to respond. Possibly he recognized the presence of the notorious Mr. Jack Hamlin in the dark-eyed stranger, and may have had ample reasons for refraining from voicing the popular reputation of that gentleman before his face, or possibly he may have been inattentive. Howbeit, after Mr. Hamlin's entrance he pre*termitted the hymn* of California praise and became reticent

and absorbed in his morning paper. Mr. Hamlin waited for the lady to retire, and then, calmly ignoring the presence of any other individual, languidly drew from his pocket a revolver and bowie-knife, and placing them in an easy habitual manner on either side of his plate, glanced carelessly over the table, and then called Pete to his side.

"Tell them," said Jack quietly, "that I want some *large* potatoes: ask them what they mean by putting those little things on the table. Tell them to be quick. Is your rifle loaded?"

"Yes, sah," said Pete promptly, without relaxing a muscle of his serious ebony face.

"Well — take it along with you."

But here the curiosity of Mr. Raynor, who had been just commenting on the really enormous size of the potatoes, got the best of his prudence. Failing to make his companion respond to his repeated elbowings, he leaned over the table toward the languid stranger. "Excuse me, sir," he said politely, "but did I understand you to say that you thought these potatoes *small* — that there are really larger ones to be had?"

"It 's the first time," returned Jack gravely, "that I ever was insulted by having a *whole* potato brought to me. I did n't know it was possible before. Perhaps in this part of the country the vegetables are poor. I 'm a stranger to this section. I take it you are too. But because I am a stranger I don't see why I should be imposed upon."

"Ah, I see," said the mystified Raynor, "but if I might ask another question — you 'll excuse me if I 'm impertinent — I noticed that you just now advised your servant to take his gun into the kitchen with him; surely" —

"Pete," interrupted Mr. Hamlin languidly, "is a good nigger. I should n't like to lose him! Perhaps you 're *right* — maybe I am a little over cautious. But when a man has lost two servants by gunshot wounds inside of three months, it makes him careful."

The perfect unconcern of the speaker, the reticence of his companion, and the dead silence of the room in which this extraordinary speech was uttered, filled the measure of Mr. Raynor's astonishment.

"Bless my soul! this is most extraordinary. I have seen nothing of this," he said, appealing in dumb show to his companion.

Mr. Hamlin followed the direction of his eyes. "Your friend is a Californian and knows what we think of any man who lies, and how most men resent such an imputation, and I reckon he 'll indorse me!"

The editor muttered a hasty assent that seemed to cover Mr. Hamlin's various propositions, and then hurriedly withdrew, abandoning his charge to Mr. Hamlin. What advantage Jack took of this situation, what extravagant accounts he gravely offered of the vegetation in Lower California, of the resources of the country, of the reckless disregard of life and property, do not strictly belong to the record of this veracious chronicle. Notwithstanding all this, Mr. Raynor found Mr. Hamlin an exceedingly fascinating companion, and later, when the editor had rejoined them, and Mr. Hamlin proceeded to beg that gentleman to warn Mr. Raynor against gambling as the one seductive, besetting sin of California, alleging that it had been the ruin of both the editor and himself, the tourist was so struck with the frankness and high moral principle of his new acquaintance as to insist upon his making one of their party, an invitation that Mr. Hamlin might have accepted but for the intervention of a singular occurrence.

During the conversation he had been curiously impressed by the appearance of a stranger who had entered and modestly and diffidently taken a seat near the door. To Mr. Hamlin this modesty and diffidence appeared so curiously at variance with his superb physique, and the exceptional strength and power shown in every muscle of his

body, that with his usual audacity he felt inclined to go forward and inquire "what was his little game?" That he was lying in wait to be "picked up," — the reader must really excuse me if I continue to borrow Mr. Hamlin's expressive vernacular,— that his diffidence and shyness were a deceit and intended to entrap the unwary, he felt satisfied, and was proportionably thrilled with a sense of admiration for him. That a rational human being who held such a hand should be content with a small ante, without "raising the other players" — But I beg the fastidious reader's forgiveness.

He was dressed in the ordinary miner's garb of the Southern mines, perhaps a little more cleanly than the average miner by reason of his taste, certainly more picturesque by reason of his statuesque shapeliness. He wore a pair of white duck trousers, a jumper or loose blouse of the same material, with a low-folded sailor's collar and sailor-knotted neckerchief, which displayed, with an unconsciousness quite characteristic of the man, the full, muscular column of his sunburnt throat, except where it was hidden by a full, tawny beard. His long, sandy curls fell naturally and equally on either side of the centre of his low, broad forehead. His fair complexion, although greatly tanned by exposure, seemed to have faded lately as by sickness or great mental distress, a theory that had some confirmation in the fact that he ate but little. His eyes were downcast, or, when raised, were so shy as to avoid critical examination. Nevertheless his mere superficial exterior was so striking as to attract the admiration of others besides Mr. Hamlin; to excite the enthusiastic attention of Mr. Raynor, and to enable the editor to offer him as a fair type of the mining population. Embarrassed at last by a scrutiny that asserted itself even through his habitual unconsciousness and preoccupation, the subject of this criticism arose and returned to the hotel veranda, where his pack and

mining implements were lying. Mr. Hamlin, who for the last few days had been in a rather exceptional mood, for some occult reason which he could not explain, felt like respecting the stranger's reserve, and quietly lounged into the billiard-room to wait for the coming of the stagecoach. As soon as his back was turned the editor took occasion to offer Mr. Raynor his own estimate of Mr. Hamlin's character and reputation, to correct his misstatements regarding Californian resources and social habits, and to restore Mr. Raynor's possibly shaken faith in California as a country especially adapted to the secure investment of capital.

"As to the insecurity of life," said the editor indignantly, "it is as safe here as in New York or Boston. We admit that in the early days the country was cursed by too many adventurers of the type of this very gambler Hamlin, but I will venture to say that you will require no better refutation of these calumnies than this very miner whom you admired. He, sir, is a type of our mining population; strong, manly, honest, unassuming, and perfectly gentle and retiring. We are proud, sir, we admit, of such men — eh? Oh, that 's nothing — only the arrival of the up stage!"

It certainly was something more. A momentarily increasing crowd of breathless men were gathered on the veranda before the window, and were peering anxiously over each other's head toward a central group, among which towered the tall figure of the very miner of whom they had been speaking. More than that, there was a certain undefined, restless terror in the air, as when the intense conscious passion or suffering of one or two men communicates itself vaguely without speech, sometimes even without visible sign to others. And then Yuba Bill, the driver of the Wingdam coach, strode out from the crowd into the bar-room, drawing from his hands with an evident effort his immense buckskin gloves.

"*What 's the row*, Bill?" said half a dozen voices.

"Nothin'," said Bill gruffly; "only the sheriff of Calaveras ez kem down with us hez nabbed his man jest in his very tracks."

"When, Bill?"

"Right yer — on this very verandy — furst man he seed!"

"What for?" "Who?" "What hed he bin doin'?" "Who is it?" "What's up?" persisted the chorus.

"Killed a man up at One Horse Gulch, last night," said Bill, grasping the decanter which the attentive bar-keeper had, without previous request, placed before him.

"Who did he kill, Bill?"

"A little Mexican from 'Frisco by the name o' Ramirez."

"What's the man's name that killed him — the man that you took?"

The voice was Jack Hamlin's.

Yuba Bill instantly turned, put down his glass, wiped his mouth with his sleeve, and then deliberately held out his great hand with an exhaustive grin. "Dern my skin, ole man, if it ain't you! And how's things, eh? Yer lookin' a little white in the gills, but peart and sassy, ez usual. Heerd you was kinder off color, down in Sacramento las' week. And it's you, ole fell, and jest in time! Bar-keep — hist that pizen over to Jack. Here to ye agin, ole man. But I'm glad to see ye!"

The crowd hung breathless over the two men — awe-struck and respectful. It was a meeting of the gods — Jack Hamlin and Yuba Bill. None dared speak. Hamlin broke the silence at last, and put down his glass.

"What," he asked lazily, yet with a slight color on his cheek, "did you say was the name of the chap that fetched that little Mexican?"

"Gabriel Conroy," said Bill.

CHAPTER II

MR. HAMLIN TAKES A HAND

THE capture had been effected quietly. To the evident astonishment of his captor, Gabriel had offered no resistance, but had yielded himself up with a certain composed willingness, as if it were only the preliminary step to the quicker solution of a problem that was sure to be solved. It was observed, however, that he showed a degree of caution that was new to him — asking to see the warrant, the particulars of the discovery of the body, and utterly withholding that voluble explanation or apology which all who knew his character confidently expected him to give, whether guilty or innocent — a caution which, accepted by them as simply the low cunning of the criminal, told against him. He submitted quietly to a search that, however, disclosed no concealed weapon or anything of import. But when a pair of handcuffs were shown him, he changed color, and those that were nearest to him saw that he breathed hurriedly, and hesitated in the first words of some protest that rose to his lips. The sheriff, a man of known intrepidity, who had the rapid and clear intuition that comes with courageous self-possession, noticed it also, and quietly put the handcuffs back in his pocket.

"I reckon there 's no use for 'em here; ef *you* 're willin' to take the risks, *I* am."

The eyes of the two men met, and Gabriel thanked him. In that look he recognized and accepted the fact that on a motion to escape he would be instantly killed.

They were to return with the next stage, and in the

interval Gabriel was placed in an upper room, and securely guarded. Here, falling into his old apologetic manner, he asked permission to smoke a pipe, which was at once granted by his good-humored guard, and then threw himself at full length upon the bed. The rising wind rattled the windows noisily, and, entering, tossed the smoke-wreaths that rose from his pipe in fitful waves about the room. The guard, who was much more embarrassed than his charge, was relieved of an ineffectual attempt to carry on a conversation suitable to the occasion by Gabriel's simple directness, —

"You need n't put yourself out to pass the time o' day with me," he said gently, "that bein' extry to your reg'lar work. Ef you hev any friends ez you 'd like to talk to in your own line, invite 'em in, and don't mind me."

But here the guard's embarrassment was further relieved by the entrance of Joe Hall, the sheriff.

"There 's a gentleman here to speak with you," he said to Gabriel; "he can stay until we 're ready to go." Turning to the guard, he added, "You can take a chair outside the door in the hall. It 's all right, it 's the prisoner's counsel."

At the word Gabriel looked up. Following the sheriff, Lawyer Maxwell entered the room. He approached Gabriel, and extended with grave cordiality a hand that had apparently wiped from his mouth the last trace of mirthfulness at the door.

"I did not expect to see you again so soon, Gabriel, but as quickly as the news reached me, and I heard that our friend Hall had a warrant for you, I started after him. I would have got here before him, but my horse gave out." He paused, and looked steadily at Gabriel. "Well!"

Gabriel looked at him in return, but did not speak.

"I supposed you would need professional aid," he went on, *with a slight* hesitation, "perhaps *mine* — knowing that

I was aware of some of the circumstances that preceded this affair."

"Wot circumstances?" asked Gabriel, with the sudden look of cunning that had before prejudiced his captors.

"For Heaven's sake, Gabriel," said Maxwell, rising with a gesture of impatience, "don't let us repeat the blunder of our first interview. *This* is a serious matter; *may be* very serious to you. Think a moment. Yesterday you sought my professional aid to deed to your wife all your property, telling me that you were going away never to return to One Horse Gulch. I do not ask you now *why* you did it. I only want you to reflect that I am just now the only man who knows that circumstance, — a circumstance that I can tell you as a lawyer is somewhat important in the light of the crime that you are now charged with."

Maxwell waited for Gabriel to speak, wiping away as he waited the usual smile that lingered around his lips. But Gabriel said nothing.

"Gabriel Conroy," said Lawyer Maxwell, suddenly dropping into the vernacular of One Horse Gulch, "are you a fool?"

"Thet 's so," said Gabriel, with the simplicity of a man admitting a self-evident proposition. "Thet 's so; I reckon I are."

"I should n't wonder," said Maxwell, again swiftly turning upon him, "if you were!" He stopped, as if ashamed of his abruptness, and said more quietly and persuasively, "Come, Gabriel, if you won't confess to *me*, I suppose that I must to *you*. Six months ago I thought you an impostor. Six months ago the woman who is now your wife charged you with being an impostor; with assuming a name and right that did not belong to you; in plain English, said that you had set yourself up as Gabriel Conroy, and that she, who was Grace Conroy, the sister of the real Gabriel, knew *that you lied*. She substantiated all this by proofs;

hang it," continued Maxwell, appealing in dumb show to the walls, "there isn't a lawyer living as would n't have said it was a good case, and been ready to push it in any court. Under these circumstances I sought you, and you remember how. You know the result of that interview. I can tell you now that if there ever was a man who palpably confessed to guilt when he was innocent, *you* were that man. Well, after your conduct there was explained by Olly, without, however, damaging the original evidence against you, or prejudicing her rights, this woman came to me and said that she had discovered that you were the man who had saved her life at the risk of your own, and that for the present she could not, in delicacy, push her claim. When afterwards she told me that this gratitude had — well, ripened into something more serious, and that she had engaged herself to marry you, and so condone your offense, why, it was woman-like and natural, and I suspected nothing. I believed her story — believed she had a case. Yes, sir; the last six months I have looked upon you as the creature of that woman's foolish magnanimity. I could see that she was soft on you, and believed that you had fooled her. I did, hang me! There, if you confess to being a fool, I do to having been an infernal sight bigger one."

He stopped, erased the mirthful past with his hand, and went on: —

"I began to suspect something when you came to me yesterday with this story of your going away, and this disposal of your property. When I heard of the murder of this stranger — one of your wife's witnesses to her claim — near your house, your own flight, and the sudden disappearance of your wife, my suspicions were strengthened. And when I read this note from your wife, delivered to you *last night* by one of her servants, and picked up early this *morning near the* body, my suspicions were confirmed."

As he finished he took from his pocket a folded paper and handed it to Gabriel. He received it mechanically, and opened it. It was his wife's note of the preceding night. He took out his knife, still holding the letter, and with its blade began stirring the bowl of his pipe. Then after a pause, he asked cautiously, —

"And how did *ye* come by this yer?"

"It was found by Sal Clark, brought to Mrs. Markle, and given to me. Its existence is known only to three people, and they are your friends."

There was another pause, in which Gabriel deliberately stirred the contents of his pipe. Mr. Maxwell examined him curiously.

"Well," he said at last, "what is your defense?"

Gabriel sat up on the bed and rapped the bowl of his pipe against the bedpost to loosen some refractory encrustation.

"Wot," he asked gravely, "would be *your* idee of a good defense? Axin' ye ez a lawyer having experin's in them things, and reck'nin' to pay ez high ez eny man fo' the same, wot would *you* call a good defense?" And he gravely laid himself down again in an attitude of respectful attention.

"We hope to prove," said Maxwell, really smiling, "that when you left your house and came to my office the murdered man was alive and at his hotel; that he went over to the hill long before you did; that *you* did not return until the evening — *after* the murder was committed, as the 'secret' mentioned in your wife's mysterious note evidently shows. That for some reason or other it was her design to place you in a suspicious attitude. That the note shows that she refers to some fact of which she was cognizant and not yourself."

"Suthin' that she knowed, and I did n't get to hear," translated Gabriel quietly.

"Exactly! Now you see the importance of that note."

Gabriel did not immediately reply, but slowly lifted his huge frame from the bed, walked to the open window, still holding the paper in his hands, deliberately tore it into the minutest shreds before the lawyer could interfere, and then threw it from the window.

"Thet paper don't 'mount ter beans, nohow!" he said quietly but explanatively, as he returned to the bed.

It was Lawyer Maxwell's turn to become dumb. In his astonished abstraction he forgot to wipe his mouth, and gazed at Gabriel with his nervous smile as if his client had just perpetrated a practical joke of the first magnitude.

"Ef it 's the same to you, I 'll just gin ye my idee of a de-fense," said Gabriel apologetically, relighting his pipe, "allowin' o' course that you knows best, and askin' no deduckshun from your charges for advice. Well, you jess stands up afore the jedge, and you slings 'em a yarn suthin' like this: 'Yer 's me, for instans,' you sez, sez you, 'ez gambols — gambols very deep — jess fights the tiger, wharever and whenever found, the same bein' onbeknownst ter folks gin'rally, and spechil te my wife, ez was July. Yer 's me been gambolin' desprit with this yer man, Victyor Ramyirez, and gets lifted bad! and we hez, so to speak, a differculty about some p'ints in the game. I allows one thing, he allows another, and this yer man gives me the lie and I stabs him!' Stop — hole your hosses!" interjected Gabriel suddenly, "thet looks bad, don't it? he bein' a small man, a little feller 'bout your size. No! Well, this yer 's the way we puts it up: 'Seving men — *seving* — friends o' his — comes at me, permiskis-like, one down, and nex' comes on, and we hez it mighty lively thar fur an hour, until me, bein' in a tight place, hez to use a knife and cuts this yer man bad!' Thar, that 's 'bout the thing! Now ez to my runnin' away, *you sez,* sez you, ez how I disremembers owin' to the 'cite-*ment that I hez* a 'p'intment in Sacramento the very nex'

day, and waltzes down yer to keep it, in a hurry. Ef they want to know whar July ez, you sez she gits wild on my not comin' home, and starts that very night arter me. Thar, thet 's 'bout my idee — puttin' it o' course in your own shape, and slingin' in them bits o' po'try and garbage, and kinder sassin' the plaintiff's counsel, ez you know goes down afore a jedge and jury."

Maxwell rose hopelessly, "Then, if I understand you, you intend to admit" —

"Thet I done it? In course!" replied Gabriel; "but," he added, with a cunning twinkle in his eye, "justifybly — justifyble homyside, ye mind! — bein' in fear o' my life from seving men. In course," he added hurriedly, "I can't identify them seving strangers in the dark, so thar 's no harm or suspicion goin' to be done enny o' the boys in the Gulch."

Maxwell walked gravely to the window, and stood looking out without speaking. Suddenly he turned upon Gabriel with a brighter face and more earnest manner. "Where 's Olly?"

Gabriel's face fell. He hesitated a moment. "I was on my way to the school in Sacramento whar she iz."

"You must send for her — I must see her at once!"

Gabriel laid his powerful hand on the lawyer's shoulder.

"She iz n't — that chile — to know anythin' o' this. You hear?" he said, in a voice that began in tones of deprecation, and ended in a note of stern warning.

"How are you to keep it from her?" said Maxwell, as determinedly. "In less than twenty-four hours every newspaper in the State will have it — with their own version and comments. No; you must see her. She must hear it first from your own lips."

"But — I — can't — see — her just now," said Gabriel, with a voice that for the first time during their interview faltered in its accents.

"*Nor need you,*" responded the lawyer quickly. "Trust

that to me. *I* will see her, and you shall afterwards. You need not fear I will prejudice your case. Give me the address! Quick!" he added, as the sound of footsteps and voices approaching the room came from the hall.

Gabriel did as he requested. "Now one word," he continued hurriedly, as the footsteps halted at the door.

"Yes," said Gabriel.

"As you value your life and Olly's happiness, hold your tongue."

Gabriel nodded with cunning comprehension. The door opened to Mr. Jack Hamlin, diabolically mischievous, self-confident, and audacious! With a familiar nod to Maxwell he stepped quickly before Gabriel and extended his hand. Simply, yet conscious of obeying some vague magnetic influence, Gabriel reached out his own hand and took Jack's white, nervous fingers in his own calm, massive grasp.

"Glad to see you, pard!" said that gentleman, showing his white teeth and reaching up to clap his disengaged hand on Gabriel's shoulder. "Glad to see you, old boy, — even if you have cut in and taken a job out of my hands that I was rather lyin' by to do myself. Sooner or later I'd have fetched that Mexican — if you had n't dropped into my seat and taken up my hand. Oh, it 's all right, Mack!" he said, intercepting the quick look of caution that Maxwell darted at his client, "don't do that. We 're all friends here. If you want me to testify, I 'll take my oath that there has n't been a day this six months that that infernal hound, Ramirez, was n't jest pantin' to be planted in his tracks! I can hardly believe I ain't done it myself." He stopped, partly to enjoy the palpable uneasiness of Maxwell, and perhaps in some admiration of Gabriel's physique.

Maxwell quickly seized this point of vantage. "You can do your friend here a very great service," he said to *Jack, lowering his* voice as he spoke.

Jack laughed. "No, Mack, it won't do! They would n't believe me! There ain't judge or jury you could play that on!"

"You don't understand me," said Maxwell, laughing a little awkwardly. "I did n't mean that, Jack. This man was going to Sacramento to see his little sister"—

"Go on," said Jack, with much gravity; "of course he was. I know that. 'Dear brother, dear brother, come home with me now!' Certainly. So 'm I. Goin' to see an innocent little thing 'bout seventeen years old, blue eyes and curly hair! Always go there once a week. Says he must come! Says she 'll" — He stopped in the full tide of his irony, for, looking up, he caught a glimpse of Gabriel's simple, troubled face and sadly reproachful eyes. "Look here," said Jack, turning savagely on Maxwell, "what are you talking about, anyway?"

"I mean what I say," returned Maxwell quickly. "He was going to see his sister — a mere child. Of course he can't go now. But he must see her — if she can be brought to him. Can you — *will* you do it?"

Jack cast another swift glance at Gabriel. "Count me in," he said promptly; "when shall I go?"

"Now — at once."

"All right. Where shall I fetch her to?"

"One Horse Gulch."

"The game 's made," said Jack, sententiously. "She 'll be there by sundown to-morrow." He was off like a flash, but as swiftly returned, and called Maxwell to the door. "Look here," he said, in a whisper, "p'r'aps it would be as well if the sheriff did n't know I was *his* friend," he went on, indicating Gabriel with a toss of his head and a wink of his black eye, "because, you see, Joe Hall and I ain't friends. We had a little difficulty, and some shootin' and foolishness down at Marysville last year. Joe 's a good, square *man,* but he ain't above prejudice, and it *might go against* our man."

Maxwell nodded, and Jack once more darted off.

But his color was so high, and his exaltation so excessive, that when he reached his room his faithful Pete looked at him in undisguised alarm. "Bress us — it, 't ain't no whiskey, Mars Jack, arter all de doctors tole you?" he said, clasping his hands in dismay.

The bare suggestion was enough for Jack in his present hilarious humor. He instantly hiccuped, lapsed wildly over against Pete with artfully simulated alcoholic weakness, tumbled him on the floor, and grasping his white, wooly head, waved over it a bootjack, and frantically demanded "another bottle." Then he laughed; as suddenly got up with the greatest gravity and a complete change in his demeanor, and wanted to know, severely, what he, Pete, meant by lying there on the floor in a state of beastly intoxication?

"Bress me! Mars Jack, but ye *did* frighten me. I jiss allowed dem tourists downstairs had been gettin' ye tight."

"You did — you degraded old ruffian! If you 'd been reading Volney's 'Ruins,' or reflectin' on some of those moral maxims that I 'm just wastin' my time and health unloading to you, instead of making me the subject of your inebriated reveries, you would n't get picked up so often. Pack my valise, and chuck it into some horse and buggy — no matter whose. Be quick."

"Is we gwine to Sacramento, Mars Jack?"

"*We?* No, sir. *I* 'm going — alone! What I 'm doing now, sir, is only the result of calm reflection — of lying awake nights taking points and jest spottin' the whole situation. And I 'm convinced, Peter, that I can stay with you no longer. You 've been hackin' the keen edge of my finer feelin's; playin' it very low down on my moral and *religious nature,* generally ringin' in a cold deck on my *spir'ual condition,* for the last five years. You 've jest cut

up thet rough with my higher emotions thet there ain't enough left to chip in on a ten-cent ante. Five years ago," continued Jack coolly, brushing his curls before the glass, "I fell into your hands a guileless, simple youth, in the first flush of manhood, knowin' no points, easily picked up on my sensibilities, and travelin', so to speak, on my shape! And where am I now? Echo answers 'Where?' and passes for a euchre! No, Peter, I leave you to-night. Wretched misleader of youth, gummy old man with the strawberry eyebrows, farewell!"

Evidently this style of exordium was no novelty to Pete, for without apparently paying the least attention to it, he went on surlily packing his master's valise. When he had finished he looked up at Mr. Hamlin, who was humming, in a heart-broken way, "*Yes, we must part,*" varied by occasional glances of exaggerated reproach at Pete, and said, as he shouldered the valise, —

"Dis yer ain't no woman foolishness, Mars Jack, like down at dat yar mission?"

"Your suggestion, Peter," returned Jack, with dignity, "emanates from a moral sentiment debased by love feasts and camp meetings, and an intellect weakened by rum and gum and the contact of lager beer jerkers. It is worthy of a short-card sharp and a keno flopper, which I have, I regret to say, long suspected you to be. Farewell! You will stay here until I come back. If I don't come back by the day after to-morrow, come to One Horse Gulch. Pay the bill, and don't knock down for yourself more than seventy-five per cent. Remember I am getting old and feeble. You are yet young, with a brilliant future before you. Git."

He tossed a handful of gold on the bed, adjusted his hat carefully over his curls, and strode from the room. In the lower hall he stopped long enough to take aside Mr. Raynor, and with an appearance of the greatest conscien-

tiousness, to correct an error of two feet in the measurements he had given him that morning of an enormous pine-tree in whose prostrate trunk he, Mr. Hamlin, had once found a peaceful, happy tribe of one hundred Indians living. Then lifting his hat with marked politeness to Mrs. Raynor, and totally ignoring the presence of Mr. Raynor's mentor and companion, he leaped lightly into the buggy and drove away.

"An entertaining fellow," said Mr. Raynor, glancing after the cloud of dust that flew from the untarrying wheels of Mr. Hamlin's chariot.

"And so gentlemanly," smiled Mrs. Raynor.

But the journalistic conservator of the public morals of California, in and for the city and county of San Francisco, looked grave, and deprecated even that feeble praise of the departed. "His class are a curse to the country. They hold the law in contempt; they retard by the example of their extravagance the virtues of economy and thrift; they are consumers and not producers; they bring the fair fame of this land into question by those who foolishly take them for a type of the people."

"But, dear me," said Mrs. Raynor, pouting, "where your gamblers and bad men are so fascinating, and your honest miners are so dreadfully murderous, and kill people, and then sit down to breakfast with you as if nothing had happened, what are you going to do?"

The journalist did not immediately reply. In the course of some eloquent remarks, as unexceptionable in morality as in diction, which I regret I have not space to reproduce here, he, however, intimated that there was still an Unfettered Press, which "scintillated" and "shone" and "lashed" and "stung" and "exposed" and "tore away the veil," and became at various times a Palladium and a *Watchtower,* and did and was a great many other remarkable things peculiar to an Unfettered Press in a pioneer

community, when untrammeled by the enervating conditions of an effete civilization.

"And what have they done with the murderer?" asked Mr. Raynor, repressing a slight yawn.

"Taken him back to One Horse Gulch half an hour ago. I reckon he 'd as lief stayed here," said a bystander. "From the way things are p'intin' it looks as if it might be putty lively for him up thar!"

"What do you mean?" asked Raynor curiously.

"Well, two or three of them old Vigilantes from Angel's passed yer a minit ago with their rifles, goin' up that way," returned the man, lazily. "May n't be nothing in it, but it looks mighty like" —

"Like what?" asked Mr. Raynor, a little nervously.

"Lynchin'!" said the man.

CHAPTER III

IN WHICH MR. DUMPHY TAKES POINSETT INTO HIS CONFIDENCE

THE cool weather of the morning following Mr. Dumphy's momentous interview with Colonel Starbottle contributed somewhat to restore the former gentleman's tranquillity, which had been considerably disturbed. He had, moreover, a vague recollection of having invited Colonel Starbottle to visit him socially, and a nervous dread of meeting this man, whose audacity was equal to his own, in the company of others. Braced, however, by the tonic of the clear exhilarating air, and sustained by the presence of his clerks and the respectful homage of his business associates, he dispatched a note to Arthur Poinsett requesting an interview. Punctually at the hour named that gentleman presented himself, and was languidly surprised when Mr. Dumphy called his clerk and gave positive orders that their interview was not to be disturbed and to refuse admittance to all other visitors. And then Mr. Dumphy, in a peremptory, practical statement which his business habits and temperament had brought to a perfection that Arthur could not help admiring, presented the details of his interview with Colonel Starbottle. "Now, I want you to help me. I have sent to you for that business purpose. You understand, this is not a matter for the bank's regular counsel. Now what do you propose?"

"First, let me ask you, do you believe your wife is *living?*"

"*No,*" *said* Dumphy promptly, "but of course I don't *know.*"

"Then let me relieve your mind at once, and tell you that she is not."

"You know this to be a fact?" asked Dumphy.

"I do. The body supposed to be Grace Conroy's, and so identified, was your wife's. I recognized it at once, knowing Grace Conroy to have been absent at the culmination of the tragedy."

"And why did you not correct the mistake?"

"That is *my* business," said Arthur haughtily, "and I believe I have been invited here to attend to *yours*. Your wife is dead."

"Then," said Mr. Dumphy, rising with a brisk business air, "if you are willing to testify to that fact, I reckon there is nothing more to be done."

Arthur did not rise, but sat watching Mr. Dumphy with an unmoved face. After a moment Mr. Dumphy sat down again, and looked aggressively but nervously at Arthur. "Well," he said, at last.

"Is that all?" asked Arthur quietly; "are you willing to go on and establish the fact?"

"Don't know what you mean!" said Dumphy, with an attempted frankness which failed signally.

"One moment, Mr. Dumphy. You are a shrewd business man. Now do you suppose the person — whoever he or she may be — who has sent Colonel Starbottle to you relies alone upon your inability to legally prove your wife's death? May they not calculate somewhat on your *indisposition* to prove it legally; on the theory that you'd rather not open the case, for instance?"

Mr. Dumphy hesitated a moment and bit his lip. "Of course," he said shortly, "there'd be some talk among my enemies about my deserting my wife"—

"And child," suggested Arthur.

"And child," repeated Dumphy savagely, "and not coming back *again* — there'd be suthin' in the papers about

it, unless I paid 'em, but what 's that! — deserting one's wife is n't such a new thing in California."

"That is so," said Arthur, with a sarcasm that was none the less sincere because he felt its applicability to himself.

"But we 're not getting on," said Mr. Dumphy impatiently. "What 's to be done? That 's what I 've sent to you for."

"Now that we know it is not your *wife* — we must find out *who* it is that stands back of Colonel Starbottle. It is evidently some one who knows at least as much as we do of the facts; we are lucky if they know no more. Can you think of any one? Who are the survivors? Let 's see: you, myself, possibly Grace" —

"It could n't be Grace Conroy, really alive!" interrupted Dumphy hastily.

"No," said Arthur quietly, "you remember *she* was not present at the time."

"Gabriel?"

"I hardly think so. Besides, he is a friend of yours."

"It could n't be" — Dumphy stopped in his speech, with a certain savage alarm in his looks. Arthur noticed it and quietly went on.

"Who 'could n't' it be?"

"Nothing — nobody. I was only thinking if Gabriel or somebody could have told the story to some designing rascal."

"Hardly — in sufficient detail."

"Well," said Dumphy, with his coarse bark-like laugh, "if I 've got to pay to see Mrs. Dumphy decently buried, I suppose I can rely upon you to see that it 's done without a chance of resurrection. Find out who Starbottle's friend is and how much he or she expects. If I 've got to pay for this thing I 'll do it now, and get the benefit of absolute silence. So I 'll leave it in your hands," and he again rose as if dismissing the subject and his visitor, after his habitual *business manner.*

"Dumphy," said Arthur, still keeping his own seat, and ignoring the significance of Dumphy's manner, "there are two professions that suffer from a want of frankness in the men who seek their services. Those professions are Medicine and the Law. I can understand why a man seeks to deceive his physician, because he is humbugging himself; but I can't see why he is not frank to his lawyer. You are no exception to the rule. You are now concealing from *me*, whose aid you have sought, some very important reason why you wish to have this whole affair hidden beneath the snow of Starvation Camp."

"Don't know what you're driving at," said Dumphy. But he sat down again.

"Well, listen to me, and perhaps I can make my meaning clearer. My acquaintance with the late Dr. Devarges began some months before we saw you. During our intimacy he often spoke to me of his scientific discoveries, in which I took some interest, and I remember seeing among his papers frequent records and descriptions of localities in the foothills, which he thought bore the indications of great mineral wealth. At that time the doctor's theories and speculations appeared to me to be visionary, and the records of no value. Nevertheless, when we were shut up in Starvation Camp, and it seemed doubtful if the doctor would survive his discoveries, at his request I deposited his papers and specimens in a cairn at Monument Point. After the catastrophe, on my return with the relief party to camp, we found that the cairn had been opened by some one and the papers and specimens scattered on the snow. We supposed this to have been the work of Mrs. Brackett, who, in search of food, had broken the cairn, taken out the specimens, and died from the effects of the poison with which they had been preserved."

He paused and looked at Dumphy, who did not speak.

"Now," *continued* Arthur, "like all Californians I have

followed your various successes with interest and wonder. I have noticed, with the gratification that all your friends experience, the singular good fortune which has distinguished your mining enterprises, and the claims you have located. But I have been cognizant of a fact, unknown I think to any other of your friends, that nearly all of the localities of your successful claims, by a singular coincidence, agree with the memorandums of Dr. Devarges!"

Dumphy sprang to his feet with a savage, brutal laugh. "So," he shouted coarsely, "that 's the game, is it! So it seems I 'm lucky in coming to you — no trouble in finding this *woman* now, hey? Well, go on, this is getting interesting; let 's hear the rest! What are your propositions? What if I refuse, hey?"

"My first proposition," said Arthur, rising to his feet with a cold wicked light in his gray eyes, "is that you shall instantly take that speech back and beg my pardon! If you refuse, by the living God, I 'll throttle you where you stand!"

For one wild moment all the savage animal in Dumphy rose, and he instinctively made a step in the direction of Poinsett. Arthur did not move. Then Mr. Dumphy's practical caution asserted itself. A physical personal struggle with Arthur would bring in witnesses — witnesses perhaps of something more than that personal struggle. If he were victorious, Arthur, unless killed outright, would revenge himself by an exposure. He sank back in his chair again. Had Arthur known the low estimate placed upon his honor by Mr. Dumphy, he would have been less complacent in his victory.

"I did n't mean to suspect *you*," said Dumphy at last, with a forced smile; "I hope you 'll excuse me. I know you 're my friend. But you 're all wrong about these papers; you are, Poinsett, I swear. I know if the fact *were known to outsiders* it would look queer if not ex-

plained. But whose business is it, anyway, legally, I mean ? "

" No one's, unless Devarges has friends or heirs."

" He had n't any."

" There 's that wife ! "

" Bah ! — she was divorced ! "

" Indeed ! You told me on our last interview that she really was the widow of Devarges."

" Never mind that now," said Dumphy impatiently. " Look here ! You know as well as I do that no matter how many discoveries Devarges made, they were n't worth a d—n if he had n't done some work on them — improved or opened them."

" But that is not the point at issue just now," said Arthur. " Nobody is going to contest your claim or sue you for damages. But they might try to convict you of a crime. They might say that breaking into the cairn was burglary, and the taking of the papers theft."

" But how are they going to prove that ? "

" No matter. Listen to me, and don't let us drift away from the main point. The question that concerns you is this. An impostor sets up a claim to be your wife ; you and I know she is an impostor, and can prove it. She knows that, but knows also that in attempting to prove it you lay yourself open to some grave charges which she doubtless stands ready to make."

" Well, then, the first thing to do is to find out *who* she is, what she knows, and what she wants, eh ? " said Dumphy.

" No," said Arthur quietly, " the first thing to do is to prove that your wife is really dead, and to do that you must show that Grace Conroy was alive when the body purporting to be hers, but which was really your wife's, was discovered. Once establish *that* fact and you destroy the credibility of the Spanish reports, and you need not

fear any revelation from that source regarding the missing papers. And that is the only source from which evidence against you can be procured. But when you destroy the validity of that report, you of course destroy the credibility of all concerned in making it. And as I was concerned in making it, of course it won't do for you to put *me* on the stand."

Notwithstanding Dumphy's disappointment, he could not help yielding to a sudden respect for the superior rascal who thus cleverly slipped out of responsibility. "But," added Arthur coolly, "you 'll have no difficulty in establishing the fact of Grace's survival by others."

Dumphy thought at once of Ramirez. Here was a man who had seen and conversed with Grace when she had, in the face of the Spanish commander, indignantly asserted her identity and the falsity of the report. No witness could be more satisfactory and convincing. But to make use of him he must first take Arthur into his confidence; must first expose the conspiracy of Madame Devarges to personate Grace, and his own complicity with the transaction. He hesitated. Nevertheless, he had been lately tortured by a suspicion that the late Madame Devarges was in some way connected with the later conspiracy against himself, and he longed to avail himself of Arthur's superior sagacity, and after a second reflection he concluded to do it. With the same practical conciseness of statement that he had used in relating Colonel Starbottle's interview with himself, he told the story of Madame Devarges's brief personation of Grace Conroy, and its speedy and felicitous ending in Mrs. Conroy. Arthur listened with unmistakable interest and a slowly brightening color. When Dumphy had concluded he sat for a moment apparently lost in thought.

"*Well?*" at last said Dumphy interrogatively and *impatiently*.

Arthur started. "Well," he said, rising, and replacing his hat with the air of a man who had thoroughly exhausted his subject, "your frankness has saved me a world of trouble."

"How?" said Dumphy.

"There is no necessity for looking any further for your alleged wife. She exists at present as Mrs. Conroy, *alias* Madame Devarges, *alias* Grace Conroy. Ramirez is your witness. You could n't have a more willing one."

"Then my suspicions are correct."

"I don't know on what you based them. But here is a woman who has unlimited power over men, particularly over one man, Gabriel! — who alone, of all men but ourselves, knows the facts regarding your desertion of your wife in Starvation Camp, her death, and the placing of Dr. Devarges's private papers by me in the cairn. He knows, too, of your knowledge of the existence of the cairn, its locality and contents. He knows this because he was in the cabin that night when the doctor gave me his dying injunctions regarding his property — the night that you — excuse me, Dumphy, but nothing but frankness will save us now — the night that you stood listening at the door and frightened Grace with your wolfish face. Don't speak! she told me all about it! Your presence there that night gained you the information that you have used so profitably; it was your presence that fixed her wavering resolves and sent her away with me."

Both men had become very pale and earnest. Arthur moved toward the door. "I will see you to-morrow, when I will have matured some plan of defense," he said abstractedly. "We have" — he used the plural of advocacy with a peculiar significance — "*we* have a clever woman to fight who may be more than our match. Meantime, remember that Ramirez is our defense; he is our man, Dumphy; *hold fast to* him as you would to your life. *Good-day.*"

In another moment he was gone. As the door closed upon him a clerk entered hastily from the outer office.

"You said not to disturb you, sir, and here is an important dispatch waiting for you from Wingdam."

Mr. Dumphy took it mechanically, opened it, read the first line, and then said hurriedly, "Run after that man, quick! — Stop! Wait a moment. You need not go! There, that will do!"

The clerk hurriedly withdrew into the outer office. Mr. Dumphy went back to his desk again, and once more devoured the following lines: —

WINGDAM, 7th, 6 A. M.

Victor Ramirez murdered last night on Conroy's Hill. Gabriel Conroy arrested. Mrs. Conroy missing. Great excitement here; strong feeling against Gabriel. Wait instructions.

FITCH.

At first Mr. Dumphy only heard, as an echo beating in his brain, the parting words of Arthur Poinsett, "Ramirez is our defense; hold fast to him as you would to your life." And now he was dead — gone; their only witness; killed by Gabriel the plotter! What more was wanted to justify his worst suspicions? What should they do? He must send after Poinsett again; the plan of defense must be changed at once; to-morrow might be too late. Stop!

One of his accusers in prison charged with a capital crime! The other — the real murderer — for Dumphy made no doubt that Mrs. Conroy was responsible for the deed — a fugitive from justice! What need of any witness now? The blow that crippled these three conspirators had liberated him! For a moment Mr. Dumphy was actually conscious *of a paroxysm* of gratitude toward some indefinitely Supreme *Being — a God* of special providence — special to himself!

More than this, there was that vague sentiment, common, I fear, to common humanity in such crises, that this Providence was a tacit indorsement of himself. It was the triumph of Virtue (Dumphy) over Vice (Conroy *et al.*).

But there would be a trial, publicity, and the possible exposure of certain things by a man whom danger might make reckless. And could he count upon Mrs. Conroy's absence or neutrality? He was conscious that her feeling for her husband was stronger than he had supposed, and she might dare everything to save him. What had a woman of that kind to do with such weakness? Why had n't she managed it so as to kill Gabriel too? There was an evident want of practical completeness in this special Providence that, as a business man, Mr. Dumphy felt he could have regulated. And then he was seized with an idea — a damnable inspiration! — and set himself briskly to write. I regret to say that despite the popular belief in the dramatic character of all villainy, Mr. Dumphy at this moment presented only the commonplace spectacle of an absorbed man of business; no lurid light gleamed from his pale blue eyes; no Satanic smile played around the corners of his smoothly shaven mouth; no feverish exclamation stirred his moist, cool lips. He wrote methodically and briskly, without deliberation or undue haste. When he had written half a dozen letters he folded and sealed them, and without summoning his clerk, took them himself into the outer office and thence into the large counting-room. The news of the murder had evidently got abroad; the clerks were congregated together, and the sound of eager, interested voices ceased as the great man entered and stood among them.

"Fitch, you and Judson will take the quickest route to One Horse Gulch to-night. Don't waste any time on the road or spare any expense. When you get there deliver these letters, *and* take your orders from my correspondents.

Pick up all the details you can about this affair and let me know. What's your balance at the Gulch, Mr. Peebles? never mind the exact figures!"

"Larger than usual, sir, some heavy deposits."

"Increase your balance then if there should be any d—d fools who connect the bank with this matter."

"I suppose," said Mr. Fitch respectfully, "we're to look after your foreman, Mr. Conroy, sir?"

"You are to take your orders from my correspondent, Mr. Fitch, and not to interfere in any way with public sentiment. We have nothing to do with the private acts of anybody. Justice will probably be done to Conroy. It is time that these outrages upon the reputation of the California miner should be stopped. When the fame of a whole community is prejudiced and business injured by the rowdyism of a single ruffian," said Mr. Dumphy, raising his voice slightly as he discovered the interested and absorbed presence of some of his most respectable customers, "it is time that prompt action should be taken." In fact, he would have left behind him a strong Roman flavor and a general suggestion of Brutus, had he not, unfortunately, effected an anti-climax by adding, "that's business, sir," as he retired to his private office.

CHAPTER IV

MR. HAMLIN IS OFF WITH AN OLD LOVE

MR. JACK HAMLIN did not lose much time on the road from Wingdam to Sacramento. His rapid driving, his dust-bespattered vehicle, and the exhausted condition of his horse on arrival, excited but little comment from those who knew his habits, and for other criticism he had a supreme indifference. He was prudent enough, however, to leave his horse at a stable on the outskirts, and having reconstructed his toilet at a neighboring hotel, he walked briskly toward the address given him by Maxwell. When he reached the corner of the street and was within a few paces of the massive shining doorplate of Madame Eclair's pensionnat, he stopped with a sudden ejaculation, and after a moment's hesitation, turned on his heel deliberately and began to retrace his steps.

To explain Mr. Hamlin's singular conduct I shall be obliged to disclose a secret of his, which I would fain keep from the fair reader. On receiving Olly's address from Maxwell, Mr. Hamlin had only cursorily glanced at it, and it was only on arriving before the house that he recognized to his horror that it was a boarding-school, with one of whose impulsive inmates he had whiled away his idleness a few months before in a heart-breaking but innocent flirtation, and a soul-subduing but clandestine correspondence, much to the distaste of the correct principal. To have presented himself there in his proper person would be to have been refused admittance or subjected to a suspicion that would have kept Olly from his hands. For once, Mr.

Hamlin severely regretted his infelix reputation among the sex. But he did not turn his back on his enterprise. He retraced his steps only to the main street, visited a barber's shop and a jeweler's, and reappeared on the street again with a pair of enormous green goggles and all traces of his long distinguishing silken black mustache shaven from his lip. When it is remembered that this rascal was somewhat vain of his personal appearance, the reader will appreciate his earnestness and the extent of his sacrifice.

Nevertheless, he was a little nervous as he was ushered into the formal reception-room of the pensionnat, and waited until his credentials, countersigned by Maxwell, were submitted to Madame Eclair. Mr. Hamlin had no fear of being detected by his real name; in the brief halcyon days of his romance he had been known as Clarence Spifflington, — an ingenious combination of the sentimental and humorous which suited his fancy, and to some extent, he felt, expressed the character of his affection. Fate was propitious; the servant returned, saying that Miss Conroy would be down in a moment, and Mr. Hamlin looked at his watch. Every moment was precious; he was beginning to get impatient when the door opened again and Olly slipped into the room.

She was a pretty child, with a peculiar boyish frankness of glance and manner, and a refinement of feature that fascinated Mr. Hamlin, who, fond as he was of all childhood, had certain masculine preferences for good looks. She seemed to be struggling with a desire to laugh when she entered, and when Jack turned towards her with extended hands she held up her own warningly, and closing the door behind her cautiously, said, in a demure whisper, —

"She 'll come down as soon as she can slip past madame's door."

"*Who?*" asked Jack,

"Sophy."

"Who's Sophy?" asked Jack seriously. He had never known the name of his Dulcinea. In the dim epistolatory region of sentiment she had existed only as "The Blue Moselle," so called from the cerulean hue of her favorite raiment, and occasionally, in moments of familiar endearment, as "Mosey."

"Come, now, pretend you don't know, will you?" said Olly, evading the kiss which Jack always had ready for childhood. "If I was her, I would n't have anything to say to you after that!" she added, with that ostentatious chivalry of the sex towards each other, in the presence of their common enemy. "Why, she saw you from the window when you first came this morning, when you went back again and shaved off your mustache; she knew you. And you don't know her! It's mean, ain't it? — they'll grow again, won't they?" — Miss Olly referred to the mustachies and not the affections!

Jack was astonished and alarmed. In his anxiety to evade or placate the duenna, he had never thought of her charge — his sweetheart. Here was a dilemma! "Oh, yes!" said Jack hastily, with a well-simulated expression of arch-affection, "Sophy — of course — that's my little game! But I've got a note for you too, my dear," and he handed Olly the few lines that Gabriel had hastily scrawled. He watched her keenly, almost breathlessly, as she read them. To his utter bewilderment she laid the note down indifferently and said, "That's like Gabe — the old simpleton!"

"But you're goin' to do what he says," asked Mr. Hamlin, "ain't you?"

"No," said Olly promptly, "I ain't! Why, Lord! Mr. Hamlin, you don't know that man; why he does this sort o' thing every week!" Perceiving Jack stare, she went on, "Why, only last week, did n't he send to me to meet him *out on the* corner of the street, and he my own brother,

instead o' comin' here, ez he hez a right to do. Go to him at Wingdam? No! ketch me!"

"But suppose he can't come," continued Mr. Hamlin.

"Why can't he come? I tell you, it's just foolishness and the meanest kind o' bashfulness. Jes because there happened to be a young lady here from San Francisco, Rosey Ringround, who was a little took with the old fool. If he could come to Wingdam, why could n't he come here, — that 's what I want to know?"

"Will you let me see that note?" asked Hamlin.

Olly handed him the note, with the remark, "He don't spell well — and he won't let me teach him — the old Muggins!"

Hamlin took it and read as follows: —

DEAR OLLY, — If it don't run a-fowl uv yer lessings and the Maddam's willin' and the young laddies, Brother Gab's waitin' fer ye at Wingdam, so no more from your affeshtunate brother, GAB.

Mr. Hamlin was in a quandary. It never had been part of his plan to let Olly know the importance of her journey. Mr. Maxwell's injunctions to bring her "quietly," his own fears of an outburst that might bring a questioning and sympathetic school about his ears, and lastly, and not the least potently, his own desire to enjoy Olly's company in the long ride to One Horse Gulch without the preoccupation of grief, with his own comfortable conviction that he could eventually bring Gabriel out of this "fix" without Olly knowing anything about it, all this forbade his telling her the truth. But here was a coil he had not thought of. Howbeit, Mr. Hamlin was quick at expedients.

"Then you think Sophy can see me," he added, with a *sudden* interest.

"*Of course she will!*" said Olly archly. "It was right

smart in you to get acquainted with Gabe and set him up to writing that, though it 's just like him. He 's that soft that anybody could get round him. But there she is now, Mr. Hamlin; that 's her step on the stairs. And I don't suppose you two hez any need of me now."

And she slipped out of the room, as demurely as she had entered, at the same moment that a tall, slim, and somewhat sensational young lady in blue came flying in.

I can in justice to Mr. Hamlin, whose secrets have been perhaps needlessly violated in the progress of this story, do no less than pass over as sacred, and perhaps wholly irrelevant to the issue, the interview that took place between himself and Miss Sophy. That he succeeded in convincing that young woman of his unaltered loyalty, that he explained his long silence as the result of a torturing doubt of the permanence of her own affection, that his presence at that moment was the successful culmination of a long-matured and desperate plan to see her once more and learn the truth from her own lips, I am sure that no member of my own disgraceful sex will question, and I trust no member of a too fond and confiding sex will doubt. That some bitterness was felt by Mr. Hamlin, who was conscious of certain irregularities during this long interval, and some tears shed by Miss Sophy, who was equally conscious of more or less aberration of her own magnetic instincts during his absence, I think will be self-evident to the largely comprehending reader. Howbeit, at the end of ten tender yet tranquilizing minutes Mr. Hamlin remarked in low, thrilling tones, —

"By the aid of a few confiding friends, and playin' it rather low on them, I got that note to the Conroy girl, but the game 's up, and we might as well pass in our checks now, if she goes back on us, and passes out, which I reckon 's her little game. If what you say is true, Sophy, and you do *sometimes* look back to the past, and things is

generally on the square, you 'll go for that Olly and fetch her, for if I go back without that child, and throw up my hand, it 's just tampering with the holiest affections and playing it mighty rough on as white a man as ever you saw, Sophy, to say nothing of your reputation, and everybody ready to buck agin us who has ten cents to chip in on. You must make her go back with me and put things on a specie basis."

In spite of the mixed character of Mr. Hamlin's metaphor, his eloquence was so convincing and effective that Miss Sophy at once proceeded with considerable indignation to insist upon Olly's withdrawing her refusal.

"If this is the way you are going to act, you horrid little thing, after all that me and him 's trusted you, I 'd like to see the girl in school that will ever tell *you* anything again, that 's all!" — a threat so appalling that Olly, who did not stop to consider that the confidence was very recent and had been forced upon her, assented without further delay, exhibited Gabriel's letter to Madame Eclair, and having received that lady's gracious permission to visit her brother, was in half an hour in company with Mr. Hamlin on the road.

CHAPTER V

THE THREE VOICES

ONCE free from the trammeling fascinations of Sophy and the more dangerous espionage of Madame Eclair, and with the object of his mission accomplished, Mr. Hamlin recovered his natural spirits, and became so hilarious that Olly, who attributed this exaltation to his interview with Sophy, felt constrained to make same disparaging remarks about that young lady, partly by way of getting even with her for her recent interference, and partly in obedience to some well-known but unexplained law of the sex. To her great surprise, however, Mr. Hamlin's spirits were in no way damped, nor did he make any attempt to defend his Lalage. Nevertheless, he listened attentively, and when she had concluded he looked suddenly down upon her chip hat and thick yellow tresses, and said, —

"Ever been in the Southern country, Olly?"

"No," returned the child.

"Never down about San Antonio, visiting friends or relations?"

"No," said Olly decidedly.

Mr. Hamlin was silent for some time, giving his exclusive attention to his horse, who was evincing a disposition to "break" into a gallop. When he had brought the animal back into a trot again he continued, —

"*There*'s a woman! Olly."

"Down in San Antonio?" asked Olly.

Mr. Hamlin nodded.

"Purty?" continued the child.

"It ain't the word," responded Mr. Hamlin seriously. "Purty ain't the word."

"As purty as Sophy?" continued Olly, a little mischievously.

"Sophy be hanged!" Mr. Hamlin here quickly pulled up himself and the horse, both being inclined to an exuberance startling to the youth and sex of the third party. "That is — I mean something in a different suit entirely."

Here he again hesitated, doubtful of his slang.

"I see," quoth Olly, — "diamonds; Sophy 's in spades."

The gambler (in sudden and awful admiration): "Diamonds — you 've just struck it! But what do *you* know 'bout cards?"

Olly (pomposaménte): "Everything! Tell our fortunes by 'em — we girls! I 'm in hearts — Sophy 's in spades — you 're in clubs! Do you know," in a thrilling whisper, "only last night I had a letter, a journey, a death, and a gentleman in clubs, dark complected — that 's you."

Mr. Hamlin, a good deal more at ease through this revelation of the universal power of the four suits: "Speakin' of women, I suppose down there (indicating the school) you occasionally hear of angels. What 's their general complexion?"

Olly, dubiously: "In the pictures?"

Hamlin: "Yes;" (with a leading question) "sorter dark complected sometimes, hey?"

Olly, positively: "Never! always white."

Jack: "Always white?"

Olly: "Yes, and flabby!"

They rode along for some time silently. Presently Mr. Hamlin broke into a song, a popular song, one verse of which Olly supplied with such deftness of execution and melodiousness of pipe that Mr. Hamlin instantly suggested a duet, and so over the dead and barren wastes of the Sac*ramento plains* they fell to singing, often barbarously, some-

times melodiously, but never self-consciously, wherein, I take it, they approximated to the birds and better class of poets, so that rough teamsters, rude packers, and weary wayfarers were often touched, as with the birds and poets aforesaid, to admiration and tenderness; and when they stopped for supper at a wayside station, and Jack Hamlin displayed that readiness of resource, audacity of manner and address, and perfect and natural obliviousness to the criticism of propriety or the limitations of precedent, and when, moreover, the result of all this was a much better supper than perhaps a more reputable companion could have procured, she thought she had never known a more engaging person than this Knave of Clubs.

When they were fairly on the road again, Olly began to exhibit some curiosity regarding her brother, and asked some few questions about Gabriel's family, which disclosed the fact that Jack's acquaintance with Gabriel was comparatively recent.

"Then you never saw July at all?" asked Olly.

"July?" queried Jack reflectively. "What's she like?"

"I don't know whether she 's a heart or a spade," said Olly, as thoughtfully.

Jack was silent for some moments, and then after a pause, to Olly's intense astonishment, proceeded to sketch, in a few vigorous phrases, the external characteristics of Mrs. Conroy.

"Why, you said you never saw her!" ejaculated Olly.

"No more I did," responded the gambler, with a quick laugh; "this is only a little bluff."

It had grown cold with the brief twilight and the coming on of night. For some time the black, unchanging outlines of the distant Coast Range were sharply silhouetted against a pale, ashen sky, that at last faded utterly, leaving a few stars behind as emblems of the burnt-out sunset. The red

road presently lost its calm and even outline in the swiftly gathering shadows, or to Olly's fancy was stopped by shapeless masses of rock or giant-like trunks of trees that in turn seemed to give way before the skillful hand and persistent will of her driver. At times a chill exhalation from a roadside ditch came to Olly like the damp breath of an open grave, and the child shivered even beneath the thick traveling-shawl of Mr. Hamlin, with which she was enwrapped. Whereat Jack at once produced a flask and prevailed upon Olly to drink something that set her coughing, but which that astute and experienced child at once recognized as whiskey. Mr. Hamlin, to her surprise, however, did not himself partake, — a fact which she at once pointed out to him.

"At an early age, Olly," said Mr. Hamlin, with infinite gravity, "I promised an infirm and aged relative never to indulge in spirituous liquors, except on a physician's prescription. I carry this flask subject to the doctor's orders. Never having ordered me to drink any, I don't."

As it was too dark for the child to observe Mr. Hamlin's eyes, which, after the fashion of her sex, she consulted much oftener than his speech for his real meaning, and was as often deceived, she said nothing, and Mr. Hamlin relapsed into silence. At the end of five minutes he said, —

"*She* was a woman, Olly — you bet!"

Olly, with great tact and discernment, instantly referring back to Mr. Hamlin's discourse of an hour before, queried, "That girl in the Southern country?"

"Yes," said Mr. Hamlin.

"Tell me all about her," said Olly, — "all you know."

"That ain't much," mused Hamlin, with a slight sigh. "Ah, Olly, *she* could sing!"

"With the piano?" said Olly, a little superciliously.

"With the organ," said Hamlin.

Olly, whose sole idea of this instrument was of the

itinerant barrel variety, yawned slightly, and with a very perceptible lack of interest said that she hoped she would see her some time when she came up that way and was "going 'round."

Mr. Hamlin did not laugh, but after a few minutes' rapid driving began to explain to Olly with great earnestness the character of a church organ.

"I used to play once, Olly, in a church. They did say that I used sometimes to fetch that congregation, jest snatch 'em bald-headed, Olly, but it's a long time ago! There was one hymn in particular that I used to run on consid'rable — one o' them Masses o' Mozart — one that I heard *her* sing, Olly; it went something like this;" and Jack proceeded to lift his voice in the praise of Our Lady of Sorrows, with a serene unconsciousness to his surroundings, and utter absorption in his theme that would have become the most enthusiastic acolyte. The springs creaked, the wheels rattled, the mare broke, plunged, and recovered herself, the slight vehicle swayed from side to side, Olly's hat bruised and flattened itself against his shoulder, and still Mr. Hamlin sang. When he had finished he looked down at Olly. She was asleep!

Jack was an artist and an enthusiast, but not unreasonable nor unforgiving. "It 's the whiskey," he murmured to himself, in an apologetic recitation to the air he had just been singing. He changed the reins to his other hand with infinite caution and gentleness, slowly passed his disengaged arm round the swaying little figure, until he had drawn the chip hat and the golden tresses down upon his breast and shoulder. In this attitude, scarcely moving a muscle lest he should waken the sleeping child, at midnight he came upon the twinkling lights of Fiddletown. Here he procured a fresh horse, dispensing with an hostler and harnessing the animal himself, with such noiseless skill and quickness that Olly, propped up in the buggy with pil-

lows and blankets borrowed from the Fiddletown hostelry, slept through it all, nor wakened even after they were again upon the road, and had begun the long ascent of the Wingdam turnpike.

It wanted but an hour of daybreak when he reached the summit, and even then he only slackened his pace when his wheels sank to their hubs in the beaten dust of the stage road. The darkness of that early hour was intensified by the gloom of the heavy pine woods through which the red road threaded its difficult and devious way. It was very still. Hamlin could hardly hear the dead, muffled plunge of his own horse in the dusty track before him, and yet once or twice he stopped to listen. His quick ear detected the sound of voices and the jingle of Mexican spurs, apparently approaching behind him. Mr. Hamlin knew that he had not passed any horseman and was for a moment puzzled. But then he recalled the fact that a few hundred yards beyond the road was intersected by the cut-off to One Horse Gulch, which, after running parallel with the Wingdam turnpike for a half mile, crossed it in the forest. The voices were on that road, going the same way. Mr. Hamlin pushed on his horse to the crossing, and hidden by the darkness and the trunks of the giant pines, pulled up to let the strangers precede him. In a few moments the voices were abreast of him and stationary. The horsemen had apparently halted.

"Here seems to be a road," said a voice quite audibly.

"All right, then," returned another, "it 's the cut-off. We 'll save an hour, sure."

A third voice here struck in potentially, "Keep the stage road. If Joe Hall get 's wind of what 's up, he 'll run his man down to Sacramento for safe keeping. If he does he 'll take this road — it 's the only one — sabe? — we can't miss him!"

Jack Hamlin leaned forward breathlessly in his seat.

"But it 's an hour longer this way," growled the second voice. "The boys will wait," responded the previous speaker. There was a laugh, a jingling of spurs, and the invisible procession moved slowly forward in the darkness.

Mr. Hamlin did not stir a muscle until the voices failed before him in the distance. Then he cast a quick glance at the child; she still slept quietly, undisturbed by the halt or those ominous voices which had brought so sudden a color into her companion's cheek and so baleful a light in his dark eyes. Yet for a moment Mr. Hamlin hesitated. To go forward to Wingdam, now, would necessitate his following cautiously in the rear of the lynchers, and so prevent his giving a timely alarm. To strike across to One Horse Gulch by the cut-off would lose him the chance of meeting the sheriff and his prisoner had they been forewarned and were escaping in time. But for the impediment of the unconscious little figure beside him, he would have risked a dash through the party ahead of him. But that was not to be thought of now. He must follow them to Wingdam, leave the child, and trust to luck to reach One Horse Gulch before them. If they delayed a moment at Wingdam it could be done. A feeling of yearning tenderness and pity succeeded the slight impatience with which he had a moment before regarded his encumbering charge. He held her in his arms, scarcely daring to breathe lest he should waken her, hoping that she might sleep until they reached Wingdam, and that, leaving her with his faithful henchman "Pete," he might get away before she was aroused to embarrassing inquiry. Mr. Hamlin had a man's dread of scenes with even so small a specimen of the sex, and for once in his life he felt doubtful of his own readiness, and feared lest in his excitement he might reveal the imminent danger of her brother. Perhaps he was never before so conscious of that danger; perhaps he was *never* before so interested in the life of any

one. He began to see things with Olly's eyes, to look upon events with reference to *her* feelings rather than his own; if she had sobbed and cried, this sympathetic rascal really believed that he would have cried too. Such was the unconscious and sincere flattery of admiration. He was relieved when, with the first streaks of dawn, his mare wearily clattered over the scattered river pebbles and "tailings" that paved the outskirts of Wingdam. He was still more relieved when the Three Voices of the Night, now faintly visible as three armed horsemen, drew up before the veranda of the Wingdam Hotel, dismounted, and passed into the bar-room. And he was perfectly content, when a moment later he lifted the still sleeping Olly in his arms and bore her swiftly yet cautiously to his room. To awaken the sleeping Pete on the floor above, and drag him half-dressed and bewildered into the presence of the unconscious child, as she lay on Jack Hamlin's own bed, half buried in a heap of shawls and rugs, was only the work of another moment.

"Why, Mars Jack! Bress de Lord — it 's a chile!" said Pete, recoiling in sacred awe and astonishment.

"Hold your jaw!" said Jack, in a fierce whisper, "you 'll waken her! Listen to me, you chattering idiot. Don't waken her, if you want to keep the bones in your creaking old skeleton whole enough for the doctors to buy. Let her sleep as long as she can. If she wakes up and asks after me, tell her I 'm gone for her brother. Do you hear? Give her anything she asks for — except — the truth! What are you doing, you old fool?"

Pete was carefully removing the mountain of shawls and blankets that Jack had piled upon Olly. "'Fore God, Mars Jack — you 's smuddering dat chile!" was his only response. Nevertheless Jack was satisfied with a certain vague tenderness in his manipulation, and said curtly, "Get me a horse!"

"*It ain't to be* did, Mars Jack; de stables is all gone —

cleaned! Dey 's a rush over to One Horse Gulch, all day!"

"There are three horses at the door," said Jack, with wicked significance.

"For de love of God, Mars Jack, don't ye do dat!" ejaculated Pete, in unfeigned and tremulous alarm. "Dey don't take dem kind o' jokes yer worth a cent — dey 'd be doin' somefin' awful to ye, sah — shuah 's yer born!"

But Jack, with the child lying there peaceably in his own bed, and the Three Voices growing husky in the bar-room below, regained all his old audacity. "I have n't made up my mind," continued Jack coolly, "which of the three I 'll take, but you 'll find out from the owner when I do! Tell him that Mr. Jack Hamlin left his compliments and a mare and buggy for him. You can say that if he keeps the mare from breaking and gives her her head downhill, she can do her mile inside of 2.45. Hush! not a word! By-bye." He turned, lifted the shawl from the fresh cheek of the sleeping Olly, kissed her, and shaking his fist at Pete, vanished.

For a few moments the negro listened breathlessly. And then there came the sharp, quick clatter of hoofs from the rocky road below, and he sank dejectedly at the foot of the bed. "He 's gone — done it! Lord save us! but it 's a hangin' matter yer!" And even as he spoke Mr. Jack Hamlin, mounted on the fleet mustang that had been ridden by the Potential Voice, with his audacious face against the red sunrise and his right shoulder squarely advanced, was butting away the morning mists that rolled slowly along the river road to One Horse Gulch.

CHAPTER VI

MR. DUMPHY IS PERPLEXED BY A MOVEMENT IN REAL ESTATE

MR. DUMPHY'S confidence in himself was so greatly restored that several business enterprises of great pith and moment, whose currents for the past few days had been turned awry, and so "lost the name of action," were taken up by him with great vigor and corresponding joy to the humbler business associates who had asked him just to lend his name to that project, and make "a big thing of it." He had just given his royal sanction and a check to an Association for the Encouragement of Immigration by the distribution through the sister States of one million seductive pamphlets, setting forth the various resources and advantages of California for the farmer, and proving that one hundred and fifty dollars spent for a passage thither was equal to the price of a farm; he had also assisted in sending the eloquent Mr. Blowhard and the persuasive Mr. Windygust to present these facts orally to the benighted dwellers of the East, and had secured the services of two eminent Californian statisticians to demonstrate the fact that more people were killed by lightning and frozen to death in the streets of New York in a single year than were ever killed by railroad accidents or human violence in California during the past three centuries; he had that day conceived the "truly magnificent plan" of bringing the waters of Lake Tahoe to San Francisco by ditches, thereby enabling the citizens to keep the turf in their dooryards *green through the* summer. He had started two banks,

a stage-line, and a watering-place, whose climate and springs were declared healthful by edict, and were aggressively advertised; and he had just projected a small suburban town that should bear his name. He had returned from this place in high spirits with a company of friends in the morning after this interview with Poinsett. There was certainly no trace of the depression of that day in his manner.

It was a foggy morning, following a clear, still night — an atmospheric condition not unusual at that season of the year to attract Mr. Dumphy's attention, yet he was conscious on reaching his office of an undue oppressiveness in the air that indisposed him to exertion, and caused him to remove his coat and cravat. Then he fell to work upon his morning's mail, and speedily forgot the weather. There was a letter from Mrs. Sepulvida, disclosing the fact that, owing to the sudden and unaccountable drying up of the springs on the lower plains, large numbers of her cattle had died of thirst and were still perishing. This was of serious import to Mr. Dumphy, who had advanced money on this perishable stock, and he instantly made a memorandum to check this sudden freak of nature, which he at once attributed to feminine carelessness of management. Further on Mrs. Sepulvida inquired particularly as to the condition of the Conroy mine, and displayed a disposition, characteristic of her sex, to realize at once on her investment. Her letter ended thus: "But I shall probably see you in San Francisco. Pepe says that this morning the markings on the beach showed the rise of a tide or wave during the night higher than any ever known since one thousand eight hundred. I do not feel safe so near the beach, and shall rebuild in the spring." Mr. Dumphy smiled grimly to himself. He had at one time envied Poinsett. But here was the woman he was engaged to marry, careless, improvident, with a vast *estate,* and on the eve of financial disaster

through her carelessness, and yet actually about to take a journey of two hundred miles because of some foolish, womanish whim or superstition. It would be a fine thing if this man, to whom good fortune fell without any effort on his part,— this easy, elegant, supercilious Arthur Poinsett, who was even indifferent to that good fortune, — should find himself tricked and deceived! should have to apply to him, Dumphy, for advice and assistance! And this, too, after his own advice and assistance regarding the claims of Colonel Starbottle's client had been futile. The revenge would be complete. Mr. Dumphy rubbed his hands in prospective satisfaction.

When, a few moments later, Colonel Starbottle's card was put into his hand, Mr. Dumphy's satisfaction was complete. This was the day that the gallant Colonel was to call for an answer; it was evident that Arthur had not seen him, nor had he made the discovery of Starbottle's unknown client. The opportunity of vanquishing this man without the aid or even knowledge of Poinsett was now before him. By way of preparing himself for the encounter, as well as punishing the Colonel, he purposely delayed the interview, and for full five minutes kept his visitor cooling his heels in the outer office.

He was seated at his desk, ostentatiously preoccupied, when Colonel Starbottle was at last admitted. He did not raise his head when the door opened, nor in fact until the Colonel, stepping lightly forward, walked to Dumphy's side, and deliberately unhooking his cane from its accustomed rest on his arm, laid it, pronouncedly, on the desk before him. The Colonel's face was empurpled, the Colonel's chest was efflorescent and bursting, the Colonel had the general effect of being about to boil over the top button of his coat, but his manner was jauntily and daintily precise.

"One moment! — a single moment, sir!" he said, with *husky politeness.* "Before proceeding to business — er —

we will devote a single moment to the necessary explanations of — er — er — a gentleman. The kyard now lying before you, sir, was handed ten minutes ago to one of your subordinates. I wish to inquire, sir, if it was then delivered to you ?"

"Yes," said Mr. Dumphy, impatiently.

Colonel Starbottle leaned over Mr. Dumphy's desk and coolly rung his bell. Mr. Dumphy's clerk instantly appeared at the door. "I wish" — said the Colonel, addressing himself to the astounded employé as he stood loftily over Mr. Dumphy's chair — "I have — er — in fact sent for you, to withdraw the offensive epithets I addressed to you, and the threats — of er — of er — personal violence! The offense — is not yours, — but — er — rests with your employer, for whose apology I am — er — now waiting. Nevertheless, I am ready, sir, to hold myself at your service — that is — er — of course — after my responsibility — er — with your master — er — ceases!"

Mr. Dumphy, who in the presence of Colonel Starbottle felt his former awkwardness return, signed with a forced smile to his embarrassed clerk to withdraw, and said hastily, but with an assumption of easy familiarity, "Sorry, Colonel, — sorry, but I was very busy, and am now. No offense. All a mistake, you know! business man and business hours," and Mr. Dumphy leaned back in his chair, and emitted his rare cachinnatory bark.

"Glad to hear it, sir, I accept your apology," said the Colonel, recovering his good humor and his profanity together. "Hang me, if I did n't think it was another affair like that I had with old Maje Tolliver, of Georgia. Called on him in Washington in '48 during session. Boy took up my kyard. Waited ten minutes, —no reply! Then sent friend, poor Jeff Boomerang, dead now, killed in New Orleans by Ben Pastor — with challenge. Hang me, sir, after the second *shot, Maje* sends for me, lying thar with hole in

both lungs, gasping for breath. 'It 's all a blunder, Star,' he says; 'boy never brought kyard. Horsewhip the nigger for me, Star, for I reckon I won't live to do it,' and died like a gentleman, blank me!"

"What have you got to propose?" said Mr. Dumphy hastily, seeing an opportunity to stop the flow of the Colonel's recollections.

"According to my memory, at our last interview over the social glass in your own house, I think something was said of a proposition coming from you. That is — er," continued the Colonel loftily, "I hold myself responsible for the mistake, if any."

It had been Mr. Dumphy's first intention to assume the roughly offensive; to curtly inform Colonel Starbottle of the flight of his confederate, and dare him to do his worst. But for certain vague reasons he changed his plan of tactics. He drew his chair closer to the Colonel, and clapping his hand familiarly on his shoulder, began: —

"You 're a man of the world, Starbottle — so am I. Sabe? You 're a gentleman — so am I," he continued hastily. "But I 'm a business man, and you 're not. Sabe? Let 's understand each other. No offense, you know, but in the way of business. This woman, claiming to be my wife, don't exist — it 's all right, you know, I understand. I don't blame *you*, but you 've been deceived, and all that sort of thing. I 've got the proofs. Now, as a man of the world and a gentleman and a business man, when I say the game 's up! you 'll understand me. Look at that — there!" He thrust into Starbottle's hand the telegram of the preceding day. "There! the man 's hung by this time — lynched! The woman 's gone!"

Colonel Starbottle read the telegram without any perceptible dismay or astonishment.

"Conroy! Conroy! — don't know the man. There was a *McConroy, of St. Jo*, but I don't think it 's the same.

No, sir! this ain't like him, sir! Don't seem to be a duel, unless he 'd posted the man to kill on sight — murder 's an ugly word to use to gentlemen. D—n me, sir, I don't know but he could hold the man responsible who sent that dispatch. It 's offensive, sir — very!"

"And you don't know Mrs. Conroy?" continued Mr. Dumphy, fixing his eyes on Colonel Starbottle's face.

"Mrs. Conroy! the wife of the superintendent — one of the most beautiful women! Good Ged, sir, I do! And I 'm dev'lish sorry for her. But what 's this got to do with our affair? Oh, I see! Ged!" The Colonel suddenly chuckled, drew out his handkerchief, and waved it in the air with deprecatory gallantry. "Gossip, sir, all gossip. People will talk! A fine woman! Blank me, if she was inclined to show some attention to Colonel Starbottle, Ged, sir, it was no more than other women have. You comprehend, Dumphy? Ged, sir! so the story 's got round, eh? — husband 's jealous — killed wrong man! Folks think she 's run off with Colonel Starbottle. Ha! ha! No, sir," he continued, suddenly dropping into an attitude of dignified severity. "You can say that Colonel Starbottle branded the story as a lie, sir! That whatever might have been the foolish indiscretion of a susceptible sex, Colonel Starbottle will defend the reputation of that lady, sir, with his life — with his life!"

Absurd and ridiculous as this sudden diversion of Colonel Starbottle from the point at issue had become, Dumphy could not doubt his sincerity, nor the now self-evident fact that Mrs. Conroy was *not* his visitor's mysterious client! Mr. Dumphy felt that his suddenly built up theory was demolished and his hope with it. He was still at the mercy of this conceited braggart and the invisible power behind him — whoever or whatever it might be. Mr. Dumphy was not inclined to superstition, but he began to experience a strange awe of his unknown persecutor, and

resolved at any risk to discover who it was. Could it be really his wife? — had not the supercilious Poinsett been himself tricked — or was he not now trying to trick him, Dumphy? Could n't Starbottle be bribed to expose at least the name of his client? He would try it.

"I said just now you had been deceived in this woman who represents herself to be my wife. I find I have been mistaken in the person who I believe imposed upon you, and it is possible that I may be otherwise wrong. My wife may be alive. I am willing to admit it. Bring her here to-morrow and I will accept it as a fact."

"You forget that she refuses to see you again," said Colonel Starbottle, "until she has established her claim by process of law."

"That 's so! that 's all right, old fellow; *we* understand each other. Now suppose that we business men — as a business maxim, you know — always prefer to deal with principals. Now suppose we even go so far as to do that and yet pay an agent's commission, perhaps — you understand me — even a bonus. Good! That 's business! You understand that as a gentleman and a man of the world. Now, I say, bring me your principal — fetch along that woman, and I 'll make it all right with *you*. Stop! I know what you 're going to say; you 're bound by honor and all that — I understand your position as a gentleman, and respect it. Then let me know where I can find her. Understand — you sha'n't be compromised as bringing about the interview in any way. I 'll see that you 're protected in your commissions from your client; and for my part — if a check for five thousand dollars will satisfy you of my desire to do the right thing in this matter, it 's at your service."

The colonel rose to his feet and applied himself apparently to the single and silent inflation of his chest, for the space of a minute. When the upper buttons of his coat

seemed to be on the point of flying off with a report, he suddenly extended his hand and grasped Dumphy's with fervor. "Permit me," he said, in a voice husky with emotion, "to congratulate myself on dealing with a gentleman and a man of honor. Your sentiments, sir, I don't care if I do say it, do you credit! I am proud, sir," continued the Colonel warmly, "to have made your acquaintance! But I regret to say, sir, that I cannot give you the information you require. I do not myself know the name or address of my client."

The look of half-contemptuous satisfaction which had irradiated Dumphy's face at the beginning of this speech changed to one of angry suspicion at its close. "That 's a d—d queer oversight of yours," he ejaculated, with an expression as nearly insulting as he dared to make it.

Colonel Starbottle did not apparently notice the manner of his speech, but drawing his chair close beside Dumphy, he laid his hand upon his arm.

"Your confidence as a man of honor and a gentleman," he began, "demands equal confidence and frankness on my part, and Culp. Starbottle of Virginia is not the man to withhold it! When I state that I do *not* know the name and address of my client, I believe, sir, there is no one now living, who will — er — er — require or — er — deem it necessary for me to repeat the assertion! Certainly not, sir," added the Colonel, lightly waving his hand, "the gentleman who has just honored me with his confidence and invited mine. I thank you, sir," he continued, as Mr. Dumphy made a hastly motion of assent, "and will go on.

"It is not necessary for me to name the party who first put me in possession of the facts. You will take my word as a gentleman — er — that it is some one unknown to you, of unimportant position, though of strict respectability, and one who acted only as the agent of my real client. When the case was handed over to me there was also put into

my possession a sealed envelope containing the name of my client and principal witness. My injunctions were not to open it until all negotiations had failed and it was necessary to institute legal proceedings. That envelope I have here. You perceive it is unopened!"

Mr. Dumphy unconsciously reached out his hand. With a gesture of polite deprecation Colonel Starbottle evaded it, and placing the letter on the table before him, continued:

"It is unnecessary to say that — er — there being in my judgment no immediate necessity for the beginning of a suit — the injunctions still restrain me, and I shall not open the letter. If, however, I accidentally mislay it on this table and it is returned to me to-morrow, sealed as before, I believe, sir, as a gentleman and a man of honor I violate no pledge."

"I see," said Mr. Dumphy, with a short laugh.

"Excuse me if I venture to require another condition, merely as a form among men of honor. Write as I dictate." Mr. Dumphy took up a pen. Colonel Starbottle placed one hand on his honorable breast, and began slowly and meditatively to pace the length of the room with the air of a second measuring the distance for his principal. "Are you ready?"

"Go on," said Dumphy impatiently.

"I hereby pledge myself — er — er — that in the event of any disclosure by me — er — of confidential communications from Colonel Starbottle to me, I shall hold myself ready to afford him the usual honorable satisfaction — er — common among gentlemen, at such times or places, and with such weapons as he may choose, without further formality of challenge, and that — er — er — failing in that I do thereby proclaim myself, without posting, a liar, poltroom, and dastard."

In the full preoccupation of his dignified composition, and possibly from an inability to look down over the in*creased exaggeration* of his swelling breast, Colonel Star-

bottle did not observe the contemptuous smile which curled the lip of his amanuensis. Howbeit, Mr. Dumphy signed the document and handed it to him. Colonel Starbottle put it in his pocket. Nevertheless he lingered by Mr. Dumphy's side.

"The — er — er — check," said the Colonel, with a slight cough, "had better be to your order, indorsed by you — to spare any criticism hereafter."

Mr. Dumphy hesitated a moment. He would have preferred as a matter of business to know first the contents of the envelope, but with a slight smile he dashed off the check and handed it to the Colonel.

"If — er — it would not be too much trouble," said the Colonel jauntily, "for the same reason just mentioned, would you give that — er — piece of paper to one of your clerks to draw the money for me?"

Mr. Dumphy impatiently, with his eyes on the envelope, rang his bell and handed the check to the clerk, while Colonel Starbottle, with an air of abstraction, walked discreetly to the window.

For the rest of Colonel Starbottle's life he never ceased to deplore this last act of caution, and regret that he had not put the check in his pocket. For as he walked to the window the floor suddenly appeared to rise beneath his feet and as suddenly sank again, and he was thrown violently against the mantelpiece. He felt sick and giddy. With a terrible apprehension of apoplexy in his whirling brain, he turned toward his companion, who had risen from his seat and was supporting himself by his swinging desk with a panic-stricken face and a pallor equal to his own. In another moment a bookcase toppled with a crash to the floor, a loud outcry arose from the outer offices, and amidst the sounds of rushing feet, the breaking of glass, and the creaking of timber, the two men dashed with a common instinct to the door. It opened two inches and remained

fixed. With the howl of a caged wild beast Dumphy threw himself against the rattling glass of the window that opened on the level of the street. In another instant Colonel Starbottle was beside him on the sidewalk, and the next they were separated, unconsciously, uncaringly, as if they had been the merest strangers in contact in a crowd. The business that had brought them together, the unfinished, incomplete, absorbing interests of a moment ago, were forgotten — were buried in the oblivion of another existence, which had no sympathy with this, whose only instinct was to fly — where, they knew not!

The middle of the broad street was filled with a crowd of breathless, pallid, death-stricken men who had lost all sense but the common instinct of animals. There were hysterical men, who laughed loudly without a cause, and talked incessantly of what they knew not. There were dumb, paralyzed men, who stood helplessly and hopelessly beneath cornices and chimneys that toppled over and crushed them. There were automatic men, who, flying, carried with them the work on which they were engaged — one whose hands were full of bills and papers, another who held his ledger under his arm. There were men who had forgotten the ordinary instincts of decency — some half-dressed. There were men who rushed from the fear of death into its presence; two were picked up, one who had jumped through a skylight, another who had blindly leaped from a fourth-story window. There were brave men who trembled like children; there was one whose life had been spent in scenes of daring and danger, who cowered, paralyzed, in the corner of the room from which a few inches of plastering had fallen. There were hopeful men who believed that the danger was over, and having passed, would, by some mysterious law, never recur; there were others who shook their heads and said that the next shock *would be fatal*. There were crowds around the dust that

arose from fallen chimneys and cornices, around runaway horses that had dashed as madly as their drivers against lamp-posts, around telegraph and newspaper offices, eager to know the extent of the disaster. Along the remoter avenues and cross-streets dwellings were deserted, people sat upon their doorsteps or in chairs upon the sidewalks, fearful of the houses they had built with their own hands, and doubtful even of this blue arch above them that smiled so deceitfully; of those far-reaching fields beyond, which they had cut into lots and bartered and sold, and which now seemed to suddenly rise against them, or slip and wither away from their very feet. It seemed so outrageous that this dull, patient earth, whose homeliness they had adorned and improved, and which, whatever their other fortune or vicissitudes, at least had been their sure inheritance, should have become so faithless. Small wonder that the owner of a little house, which had sunk on the reclaimed water front, stooped in the speechless and solemn absurdity of his wrath to shake his clenched fist in the face of the Great Mother.

The real damage to life and property had been so slight and in such pronounced contrast to the prevailing terror, that half an hour later only a sense of the ludicrous remained with the greater masses of the people. Mr. Dumphy, like all practical, unimaginative men, was among the first to recover his presence of mind with the passing of the immediate danger. People took confidence when this great man, who had so much to lose, after sharply remanding his clerks and everybody else back to business, reëntered his office. He strode at once to his desk. But the envelope was gone! He looked hurriedly among his papers — on the floor — by the broken window — but in vain.

Mr. Dumphy instantly rang his bell. The clerk appeared.

"Was that draft paid?"

"No, sir; we were counting the money when"—

"Stop it! — return the draft to me."

The young man was confiding to his confrères his suspicions of a probable "run" on the bank as indicated by Mr. Dumphy's caution, when he was again summoned by Mr. Dumphy.

"Go to Mr. Poinsett's office and ask him to come here at once."

In a few moments the clerk returned out of breath.

"Mr. Poinsett left a quarter of an hour ago, sir, for San Antonio."

"San Antonio?"

"Yes, sir — they say there 's bad news from the mission."

CHAPTER VII

IN WHICH BOTH JUSTICE AND THE HEAVENS FALL

THE day following the discovery of the murder of Victor Ramirez was one of the intensest excitement in One Horse Gulch. It was not that killing was rare in that pastoral community — foul murder had been done there upon the bodies of various citizens of more or less respectability, and the victim in the present instance was a stranger and a man who awakened no personal sympathy; but the suspicion that swiftly and instantly attached to two such important people as Mr. and Mrs. Conroy, already objects of severe criticism, was sufficient to exalt this particular crime above all others in thrilling interest. For two days business was practically suspended.

The discovery of the murder was made by Sal, who stumbled upon the body of the unfortunate Victor early the next morning during a walk on Conroy's Hill, manifestly in search of the missing man, who had not returned to the hotel that night. A few flippant souls, misunderstanding Miss Clark's interest in the stranger, asserted that he had committed suicide to escape her attentions, but all jocular hypothesis ceased when it became known that Gabriel and his wife had fled. Then came the report that Gabriel had been seen by a passing miner early in the day "shoving" the stranger along the trail, with his hand on his collar, and exchanging severe words. Then the willing testimony of Miss Clark that she had seen Mrs. Conroy in secret converse with Victor before the murder; then the unwilling evidence of the Chinaman who had overtaken

Gabriel with the letter, but who heard the sounds of quarreling and cries for help in the bushes after his departure; but this evidence was excluded from the inquest, by virtue of the famous Californian law that a pagan was of necessity a liar, and that truth only resided in the breast of the Christian Caucasian, and was excluded from the general public for its incompatibility with Gabriel's subsequent flight, and the fact that the Chinaman, being a fool, was probably mistaken in the hour. Then there was the testimony of the tunnel-men to Gabriel's appearance on the hill that night. There was only one important proof not submitted to the public or the authorities,— Mrs. Conroy's note picked up by Sal, handed to Mrs. Markle, and given by her to Lawyer Maxwell. The knowledge of this document was restricted to the few already known to the reader.

A dozen or more theories of the motive of the deed at different hours of the day occupied and disturbed the public mind. That Gabriel had come upon a lover of his wife in the act of eloping with her, and had slain him out of hand, was the first. That Gabriel had decoyed the man to an interview by simulating his wife's handwriting, and then worked his revenge on his body, was accepted later as showing the necessary deliberation to constitute murder. That Gabriel and his wife had conjointly taken this method to rid themselves of a former lover who threatened exposure, was a still later theory. Towards evening, when One Horse Gulch had really leisure to put its heads together, it was generally understood that Gabriel and Mrs. Conroy had put out of their way a dangerous and necessarily rightful claimant to that mine which Gabriel had pretended to discover. This opinion was for some time — say two hours — the favorite one, agreeing as it did with the popular opinion of Gabriel's inability to discover a mine himself, and was only *modified by* another theory that Victor was not the real

claimant, but a dangerous witness that the Conroys had found it necessary to dispose of. And when, possibly from some unguarded expression of Lawyer Maxwell, it was reported that Gabriel Conroy was an impostor under an assumed name, all further speculation was deemed unnecessary. The coroner's jury brought in a verdict against "John Doe, alias Gabriel Conroy," and One Horse Gulch added this injury of false pretense to other grievances complained of. One or two cases of horse-stealing and sluice-robbing in the neighborhood were indefinitely but strongly connected with this discovery. If I am thus particular in citing these evidences of the various gradations of belief in the guilt of the accused, it is because they were peculiar to One Horse Gulch, and of course never obtained in more civilized communities.

It is scarcely necessary to say that one person in One Horse Gulch never wavered in her opinion of Gabriel's innocence, nor that that person was Mrs. Markle. That he was the victim of a vile conspiracy — that Mrs. Conroy was the real culprit, and had diabolically contrived to fasten the guilt upon her husband, Mrs. Markle not only believed herself, but absolutely contrived to make Lawyer Maxwell and Sal believe also. More than that, it had undoubtedly great power in restraining Sal's evidence before the inquest which that impulsive and sympathetic young woman persisted in delivering behind a black veil and in a suit of the deepest mourning that could be hastily improvized in One Horse Gulch.

"Miss Clark's evidence," said the "Silveropolis Messenger," "although broken by sobs and occasional expressions of indignation against the murderer, strongly impressed the jury as the natural eloquence of one connected with the tenderest ties to the unfortunate victim. It is said that she was an old acquaintance of Ramirez, who was visiting her in the hope of inducing her to consent to a happy ter-

mination of a life-long courtship, when the dastard hand of the murderer changed the bridal wreath to the veil of mourning. From expressions that dropped from the witness's lips, although restrained by natural modesty, it would not be strange if jealousy were shown to be one of the impelling causes. It is said that previous to his marriage the alleged Gabriel Conroy was a frequent visitor at the house of Miss Clark."

I venture to quote this extract not so much for its suggestion of a still later theory in the last sentence, as for its poetical elegance, and as an offset to the ruder record of the "One Horse Gulch Banner," which, I grieve to say, was as follows: —

"Sal was no slouch of a witness. Rigged out in ten yards of Briggs's best black glazed muslin, and with a lot of black mosquito netting round her head, she pranced round the stand like a skittish hearse horse in flytime. If Sal calculates to go into mourning for every man she has to sling hash to, we'd recommend her to buy up Briggs's stock and take one of Pat Hoolan's carriages for the season. There is a strong feeling among men whose heads are level that this Minstrel Variety Performance is a bluff of the 'Messenger' to keep from the public the real motives of the murder, which it is pretty generally believed concerns some folks a little higher-toned than Sal. We mention no names, but we would like to know what the Editor of the 'Messenger' was doing in the counting-room of one of Pete Dumphy's emissaries at ten o'clock last evening. Looking up his bank account, eh? What's the size of the figures to-day? You hear us!"

At one o'clock that morning the Editor of the "Messenger" fired at the Editor of the "Banner" and missed him. At half past one two men were wounded by pistol-shots in a difficulty at Briggs's warehouse — cause not stated. At *nine o'clock half a* dozen men lounged down the main street

and ascended the upper loft of Briggs's warehouse. In ten or fifteen minutes a dozen more from different saloons in the town lounged as indifferently in the direction of Briggs's, until at half past nine the assemblage in the loft numbered fifty men. During this interval a smaller party had gathered, apparently as accidentally and indefinitely as to purpose, on the steps of the little two-story brick court-house in which the prisoner was confined. At ten o'clock a horse was furiously ridden into town, and dropped exhausted at the outskirts. A few moments later a man hurriedly crossed the plaza toward the court-house. It was Mr. Jack Hamlin. But the Three Voices had preceded him, and from the steps of the court-house were already uttering the popular mandate.

It was addressed to a single man. A man who, deserted by his posse, and abandoned by his friends, had for the last twelve hours sat beside his charge, tireless, watchful, defiant, and resolute — Joe Hall, the sheriff of Calaveras! He had been waiting for this summons, behind barricaded doors, with pistols in his belt, and no hope in his heart; a man of limited ideas and restricted resources, constant only to one intent — that of dying behind those bars, in defense of that legal trust, which his office and an extra fifty votes at the election only two months before had put into his hands. It had perplexed him for a moment that he heard the voices of some of these voters below him clamoring against him, but above their feebler pipe always rose another mandatory sentence, "We command you to take and safely keep the body of Gabriel Conroy," and, being a simple man, the recollection of the quaint phraseology strengthened him and cleared his mind. Ah me, I fear he had none of the external marks of a hero; as I remember him he was small, indistinctive, and fidgety, without the repose of strength; a man who at that extreme moment chewed tobacco and spat vigorously on the floor; who tweaked the ends of his

scanty beard, paced the floor, and tried the locks of his pistols. Presently he stopped before Gabriel, and said almost fiercely, —

"You hear that? — they are coming!"

Gabriel nodded. Two hours before, when the contemplated attack of the vigilance committee had been revealed to him, he had written a few lines to Lawyer Maxwell, which he intrusted to the sheriff. He had then relapsed into his usual tranquillity — serious, simple, and, when he had occasion to speak, diffident and apologetic.

"Are you going to help me?" continued Hall.

"In course," said Gabriel, in quiet surprise, "ef *you* say so. But don't ye do nowt ez would be gettin' yourself into troubil along o' me. I ain't worth it. Maybe it 'ud be jest as square ef ye handed me over to them chaps out yer — allowin' I was a heap o' troubil to you — and reckonin' you 'd about hed *your sheer* o' the keer o' me, and kinder passin' me round. But ef you *do* feel obligated to take keer o' me, ez hevin' promised the jedges and jury" (it is almost impossible to convey the gentle deprecatoriness of Gabriel's voice and accent at this juncture), "why," he added, "I 'm with ye. I 'm thar! You understand me!"

He rose slowly, and with quiet but powerfully significant deliberation placed the chair he had been sitting on back against the wall. The tone and act satisfied the sheriff. The seventy-four gunship, Gabriel Conroy, was clearing the decks for action.

There was an ominous lull in the outcries below, and then the solitary lifting up of a single voice, the Potential Voice of the night before! The sheriff walked to a window in the hall, and opened it. The besieger and besieged measured each other with a look. Then came the Homeric chaff: —

"Git out o' that, Joe Hall, and run home to your *mother. She 's getting* oneasy about ye!"

"The h—ll you say!" responded Hall promptly, "and the old woman in such a hurry she had to borry Al Barker's hat and breeches to come here! Run home, old gal, and don't parse yourself off for a man agin!"

"This ain't no bluff, Joe Hall! Why don't ye call? Yer 's fifty men; the returns are agin ye, and two precincts yet to hear from." (This was a double thrust, at Hall's former career as a gambler and the closeness of his late election vote.)

"All right! send 'em up by express — mark 'em C. O. D." (The previous speaker was the expressman.)

"Blank you! Git!"

"Blank you! Come on!"

Here there was a rush at the door, the accidental discharge of a pistol, and the window was slammed down. Words ceased, deeds began.

A few hours before, Hall had removed his prisoner from the uncertain tenure and accessible position of the cells below to the open court-room of the second floor, inaccessible by windows, and lit by a skylight in the roof, above the reach of the crowd, whose massive doors were barricaded by benches and desks. A smaller door at the side, easily secured, was left open for reconnoitring. The approach to the court-room was by a narrow stairway, halfway down whose length Gabriel had thrust the long court-room table as a barricade to the besiegers. The lower outer door, secured by the sheriff after the desertion of his underlings, soon began to show signs of weakening under the vigorous battery from without. From the landing the two men watched it eagerly. As it slowly yielded, the sheriff drew back toward the side door and beckoned Gabriel to follow; but with a hasty sign Gabriel suddenly sprang forward and dropped beneath the table as the door with a crash fell inward, beaten from its hinges. There was a rush of trampling feet to the stairway, a cry of baffled

rage over the impeding table, a sudden scramble up and upon it, and then, as if on its own volition, the long table suddenly reared itself on end, and staggering a moment toppled backward with its clinging human burden on the heads of the thronging mass below. There was a cry, a sudden stampede of the Philistines to the street, and Samson, rising to his feet, slowly walked to the side door, and reëntered the court-room. But at the same instant an agile besieger who, unnoticed, had crossed the Rubicon, darted from his concealment, and dashed by Gabriel into the room. There was a shout from the sheriff, the door was closed hastily, a shot, and the intruder fell. But the next moment he staggered to his knees, with outstretched hands, "Hold up! I'm yer to help ye!"

It was Jack Hamlin! haggard, dusty, grimy; his gay feathers bedraggled, his tall hat battered, his spotless shirt torn open at the throat, his eyes and cheeks burning with fever, the blood dripping from the bullet wound in his leg, but still Jack Hamlin, strong and audacious. By a common instinct both men dropped their weapons, ran and lifted him in their arms.

"There — shove that chair under me! that'll do," said Hamlin coolly. "We're even now, Joe Hall; that shot wiped out old scores, even if it has crippled me, and lost ye my valuable aid. Dry up! and listen to me, and then leave me here! There's but one way of escape. It's up there!" (He pointed to the skylight.) "The rear wall hangs over the Wingdam ditch and gully. Once on the roof, you can drop over with this rope, which you must unwind from my body, for I'm d—d if I can do it myself. Can you reach the skylight?"

"There's a stepladder from the gallery," said the sheriff joyously, "but won't they see us, and be prepared?"

"*Before they* can reach the gully by going round, you'll

be half a mile away in the woods. But what in blank are you waiting for? Go! You can hold on here for ten minutes more if they attack the same point; but if they think of the skylight, and fetch ladders, you 're gone in! Go!"

There was another rush on the staircase without; the surging of an immense wave against the heavy folding doors, the blows of pick and crowbar, the gradual yielding of the barricade a few inches, and the splintering of benches by a few pistol-shots fired through the springing crevices of the doors. And yet the sheriff hesitated. Suddenly Gabriel stooped down, lifted the wounded man to his shoulder as if he had been an infant, and beckoning to the sheriff started for the gallery. But he had not taken two steps before he staggered and lapsed heavily against Hall, who, in his turn, stopped and clutched the railing. At the same moment the thunder of the besiegers seemed to increase; not only the door, but the windows rattled, the heavy chandelier fell with a crash, carrying a part of the plaster and the elaborate cornice with it, a shower of bricks fell through the skylight, and a cry, quite distinct from anything heard before, rose from without. There was a pause in the hall, and then the sudden rush of feet down the staircase, and all was still again. The three men gazed in each other's whitened faces.

"An earthquake," said the sheriff.

"So much the better," said Jack. "It gives us time — forward!"

They reached the gallery and the little step-ladder that led to a door that opened upon the roof, Gabriel preceding with his burden. There was another rush up the staircase without the court-room, but this time there was no yielding in the door; the earthquake that had shaken the foundations and settled the walls had sealed it firmly.

Gabriel was first to step out on the roof, carrying Jack

Hamlin. But as he did so another thrill ran through the building, and he dropped on his knees to save himself from falling, while the door closed smartly behind him. In another moment the shock had passed, and Gabriel, putting down his burden, turned to open the door for the sheriff. But to his alarm it did not yield to his pressure; the earthquake had sealed it as it had the door below, and Joe Hall was left a prisoner.

It was Gabriel's turn to hesitate and look at his companion. But Jack was gazing into the street below. Then he looked up and said, "We must go on now, Gabriel, — for — for *they 've got a ladder!*"

Gabriel rose again to his feet and lifted the wounded man. The curve of the domed roof was slight; in the centre, on a rough cupola or base, the figure of Justice, fifteen feet high, rudely carved in wood, towered above them with drawn sword and dangling scales. Gabriel reached the cupola and crouched behind it, as a shout rose from the street below that told he was discovered. A few shots were fired, one bullet imbedded itself in the naked blade of the Goddess, and another, with cruel irony, shattered the equanimity of her balance. "Unwind the cord from me," said Hamlin. Gabriel did so. "Fasten one end to the chimney or the statue." But the chimney was leveled by the earthquake, and even the statue was trembling on its pedestal. Gabriel secured the rope to an iron girder of the skylight, and crawling on the roof dropped it cautiously over the gable. But it was several feet too short — too far for a cripple to drop! Gabriel crawled back to Hamlin. "You must go first," he said quietly. "I will hold the rope over the gable. You can trust me."

Without waiting for Hamlin's reply he fastened the rope under his arms and half lifted, half dragged him to the *gable. Then* pressing his hand silently, he laid himself

down and lowered the wounded man safely to the ground. He had recovered the rope again, and crawling to the cupola, was about to fasten the line to the iron girder when something slowly rose above the level of the roof beyond him. The uprights of a ladder!

The Three Voices had got tired of waiting a reply to their oft-reiterated question, and had mounted the ladder by way of forcing an answer at the muzzles of their revolvers. They reached the level of the roof, one after another, and again propounded their inquiry. And then, as it seemed to their awe-stricken fancy, the only figure there — the statue of Justice — awoke to their appeal. Awoke! leaned toward them; advanced its awful sword and shook its broken balance, and then toppling forward with one mighty impulse, came down upon them, swept them from the ladder, and silenced the Voices forever. And from behind its pedestal Gabriel arose, panting, pale, but triumphant.

CHAPTER VIII

IN TENEBRIS SERVARE FIDEM

ALTHOUGH a large man, Gabriel was lithe and active, and dropped the intervening distance where the rope was scant, lightly, and without injury. Happily the falling of the statue was looked upon as the result of another earthquake shock, and its disastrous effect upon the storming party for a while checked the attack. Gabriel lifted his half-fainting ally in his arms, and, gaining the friendly shelter of the ditch, in ten minutes was beyond the confines of One Horse Gulch, and in the shadow of the pines of Conroy's Hill. There were several tunnel openings only known to him. Luckily the first was partly screened by a fall of rock loosened by the earthquake from the hill above, and satisfied that it would be unrecognized by any eye less keen than his own, Gabriel turned into it with his fainting burden. And it was high time. For the hemorrhage from Jack Hamlin's wound was so great that that gentleman, after a faint attempt to wave his battered hat above his disheveled curls, suddenly succumbed, and lay as cold and senseless and beautiful as a carven Apollo.

Then Gabriel stripped him, and found an ugly hole in his thigh that had narrowly escaped traversing the femoral artery, and set himself about that rude surgery which he had acquired by experience, and that more delicate nursing which was instinctive with him. He was shocked at the revelation of a degree of emaciation in the figure of this young fellow that he had not before suspected. Gabriel *had nursed many* sick men, and here was one who clearly

ought to be under the doctor's hands, economizing his vitality as a sedentary invalid, who had shown himself to him hitherto only as a man of superabundant activity and animal spirits. Whence came the power that had animated this fragile shell? Gabriel was perplexed; he looked down upon his own huge frame with a new and sudden sense of apology and depreciation, as if it were an offense to this spare and bloodless Adonis.

And then with an infinite gentleness, as of a young mother over her newborn babe, he stanched the blood and bound up the wounds of his new friend, so skillfully that he never winced, and with a peculiar purring accompaniment that lulled him to repose. Once only, as he held him in his arms, did he change his expression, and that was when a shadow and a tread — perhaps of a passing hare or squirrel — crossed the mouth of his cave, when he suddenly caught the body to his breast with the fierceness of a lioness interrupted with her cubs. In his own rough experience he was much awed by the purple and fine linen of this fine gentleman's underclothing, — not knowing the prevailing habits of his class, — and when he had occasion to open his bosom to listen to the faint beatings of his heart, he put aside with great delicacy and instinctive honor a fine gold chain from which depended some few relics and keepsakes which this scamp wore. But one was a photograph, set in an open locket, that he could not fail to see, and that at once held him breathless above it. It was the exact outline and features of his sister Grace, but with a strange shadow over that complexion which he remembered well as beautiful, that struck him with superstitious awe. He scanned it again eagerly. "Maybe it was a dark day when she sot!" he murmured softly to himself; "maybe it 's the light in this yer tunnel; maybe the heat o' this poor chap's buzzum hez kinder turned it. It ain't measles, fur she hed 'em *along* o' Olly." He paused and looked

at the unconscious man before him, as if trying to connect him with the past. "No," he said simply, with a resigned sigh, "it 's agin reason! She never knowed him! It 's only my foolishness, and my thinkin' and thinkin' o' her so much! It 's another gal, and none o' your business, Gabe, and you a-prying inter another man's secrets, and takin' advantage of him when he 's down." He hurriedly replaced it in his companion's bosom, and closed the collar of his shirt, as Jack's lips moved. "Pete!" he called feebly.

"It 's his pardner, maybe, he 's callin' on," said Gabriel to himself; then aloud, with the usual, comforting professional assent, "In course, Pete, surely! He 's coming, right off — he 'll be yer afore you know it."

"Pete," continued Jack forcibly, "take the mare off my leg, she 's breaking it! Don't you see? She 's stumbled! D—n it, quick! I 'll be late. They 'll string him up before I get there!"

In a moment Gabriel's stout heart sank. If fever should set in, if he should become delirious, they would be lost. Providentially, however, Jack's aberration was only for a moment; he presently opened his black eyes and stared at Gabriel. Gabriel smiled assuringly. "Am I dead and buried," said Jack gravely, looking around the dark vault, "or have I got 'em again?"

"Ye wuz took bad fur a minit — that 's all," said Gabriel reassuringly, much relieved himself; "yer all right now!"

Hamlin tried to rise, but could not. "That 's a lie," he said cheerfully. "What 's to be done?"

"Ef you 'd let me hev my say, without gettin' riled," said Gabriel apologetically, "I 'd tell ye. Look yer," he continued persuasively, "ye ought to hev a doctor afore thet wound gets inflamed; and ye ain't goin' to get one, *bein' packed* round by me. Now don't ye flare up, but

harkin! Allowin' I goes out to them chaps ez is huntin' us, and sez, 'Look yer, you kin take me, provided ye don't bear no malice agin my friend, and you sends a doctor to fetch him outer the tunnel.' Don't yer see, they can't prove anythin' agin ye, anyway," continued Gabriel, with a look of the intensest cunning. "I 'll swear I took you pris'ner, and Joe won't go back on his shot."

In spite of his pain and danger this proposition afforded Jack Hamlin apparently the largest enjoyment. "Thank ye," he said with a smile, "but as there 's a warrant, by this time, out against me for horse-stealing, I reckon I won't put myself in the way of their nursing. They might forgive you for killing a Mexican of no great market value, but they ain't goin' to extend the right hand of fellowship to me after running off with their ringleader's mustang! Particularly when that animal 's foundered and knee-sprung. No, sir!"

Gabriel stared at his companion without speaking.

"I was late coming back with Olly to Wingdam. I had to swap the horse and buggy for the mare without having time to arrange particulars with the owner. I don't wonder you 're shocked," continued Jack mischievously, affecting to misunderstand Gabriel's silence, "but thet 's me. Thet 's the kind of company you 've got into. Procrastination and want of punctuality has brought me to this. Never procrastinate, Gabriel. Always make it a point to make it a rule, never to be late at the Sabbath-school!"

"Ef I hed owt to give ye," said Gabriel ruefully — "a drop o' whiskey, or suthin' to keep up your stren'th!"

"I never touch intoxicating liquors without the consent of my physician," said Jack gravely; "they 're too exciting! I must be kept free from all excitement. Something soothing, or sedentary like this," he added, striking his leg. But even through his mischievous smile his face paled, *and a spasm of* pain crossed it.

"I reckon we 'll hev to stick yer ontil dark," said Gabriel, "and then strike acrost the gully to the woods on Conroy's Hill. Ye 'll be easier thar, and we 're safe ontil sun-up, when we kin hunt another tunnel. Thar ain't no choice," added Gabriel apologetically.

Jack made a grimace, and cast a glance around the walls of the tunnel. The luxurious scamp missed his usual comfortable surroundings. "Well," he assented, with a sigh, "I suppose the game 's made anyway! and we 've got to stick here like snails on a rock for an hour yet. Well," he continued impatiently, as Gabriel, after improvising a rude couch for him with some withered pine tassels gathered at the mouth of the tunnel, sat down beside him, "are you goin' to bore me to death, now that you 've got me here — sittin' there like an owl? Why don't you say something?"

"Say what?" asked Gabriel simply.

"Anything! Lie if you want to; only talk."

"I 'd like to put a question to ye, Mr. Hamlin," said Gabriel, with great gentleness, — "allowin', in course, ye 'll answer or no jest ez is agree'ble to ye — reckonin' it 's no business o' mine nor pryin' into secrets, on'y jess to pass away the time ontil sundown. When you was tuk bad a spell ago, unloosin' yer shirt thar, I got to see a pictur that ye hev around yer neck. I ain't askin' who nor which it is — but on'y this — ez thet — thet — thet young woman dark-complected ez that picter allows her to be?"

Jack's face had recovered its color by the time that Gabriel had finished, and he answered promptly, "A d—d sight more so! Why, that picture 's fair alongside of her!"

Gabriel looked a little disappointed. Hamlin was instantly up in arms. "Yes, sir — and when I say that," he returned, "I mean, by thunder, that the whitest-faced woman in the world don't begin to be as handsome. Thar *ain't* an angel that she could n't give points to and beat! *That 's her style!* It don't," continued Mr. Hamlin, taking

the picture from his breast, and wiping its face with his handkerchief, — "it don't begin to do her justice. What," he asked suddenly and aggressively, "have *you* got to say about it, anyway?"

"I reckoned it kinder favored my sister Grace," said Gabriel submissively. "Ye did n't know her, Mr. Hamlin? She was lost sence '49 — thet 's all!

Mr. Hamlin measured Gabriel with a contempt that was delicious in its sublime audacity and unconsciousness. "Your sister?" he repeated. "That 's a healthy-lookin' *sister* of such a man as you — ain't it? Why, look at it," roared Jack, thrusting the picture under Gabriel's nose. "Why, it 's — it 's a *lady!*"

"Ye must n't jedge Gracey by me, nor even Olly," interposed Gabriel gently, evading Mr. Hamlin's contempt.

But Jack was not to be appeased. "Does your sister sing like an angel, and talk Spanish like Governor Alvarado? Is she connected with one of the oldest Spanish families in the State? Does she run a rancho and thirty square leagues of land, and is Dolores Salvatierra her nickname? Is her complexion like the young bark of the madroño — the most beautiful thing ever seen — did every other woman look chalky beside her, eh?"

"No!" said Gabriel with a sigh; "it was just my foolishness, Mr. Hamlin. But seein' that picter kinder" —

"I stole it," interrupted Jack, with the same frankness. "I saw it in her parlor, on the table, and I froze to it when no one was looking. Lord, *she* would n't have given it to *me*. I reckon those relatives of hers would have made it very lively for me if they 'd suspected it. Hoss-stealing ain't a circumstance to this, Gabriel," said Jack, with a reckless laugh. Then with equal frankness, and a picturesque freedom of description, he related his first and only interview with Doña Dolores. I am glad to say that this scamp exaggerated, if anything, the hopelessness of his case, dwelt

but slightly on his own services, and concealed the fact that Doña Dolores had even thanked him. "You can reckon from this the extent of my affection for that Johnny Ramirez, and why I just froze to you when I heard you 'd dropped him. But come now, it 's your deal; tell us all about it. The boys put it up that he was hangin' round your wife, — and you went for him for all he was worth. Go on — I 'm waiting — and," added Jack, as a spasm of pain passed across his face, "and aching to that degree that I 'll yell if you don't take my mind off it."

But Gabriel's face was grave and his lips silent as he bent over Mr. Hamlin to adjust the bandages. "Go on," said Jack darkly, "or I 'll tear off these rags and bleed to death before your eyes. What are you afraid of? I know all about your wife — you can't tell me anything about her. Did n't I spot her in Sacramento — before she married you — when she had this same Chileno, Ramirez, on a string. Why, she 's fooled him as she has you. You ain't such a blasted fool as to be stuck after her still, are you?" and Jack raised himself on his elbow the more intently to regard this possible transcendent idiot.

"You was speakin' o' this Mexican, Ramirez," said Gabriel, after a pause, fixing his now clear and untroubled eyes on his interlocutor.

"Of course," roared out Jack impatiently, "did you think I was talking of ——?" Here Mr. Hamlin offered a name that suggested the most complete and perfect antithesis known to modern reason.

"I did n't kill him!" said Gabriel quietly.

"Of course not," said Jack promptly. "He sorter stumbled and fell over on your bowie-knife as you were pickin' your teeth with it. But go on. How did you do it? Where did you spot him? Did he make any fight? Has he got any sand in him?"

"*I tell ye I did* n't kill him!"

"Who did, then?" screamed Jack, furious with pain and impatience.

"I don't know — I reckon — that is" — and Gabriel stopped short with a wistful, perplexed look at his companion.

"Perhaps Mr. Gabriel Conroy," said Jack, with sudden coolness and deliberation of speech, and a baleful light in his dark eyes, — "perhaps you 'll be good enough to tell me what this means — what *is* your little game? Perhaps you 'll kindly inform me what I 'm lying here crippled for? What you were doing up in the court-house, when you were driving those people crazy with excitement? What you 're hiding here in this blank family vault for? And maybe, if you 've got time, you 'll tell me what was the reason I made that pleasant little trip to Sacramento? I know I required the exercise, and then there was the honor of being introduced to your little sister — but perhaps you 'll tell me WHAT IT WAS FOR!"

"Jack," said Gabriel, leaning forward, with a sudden return of his old trouble and perplexity, "I thought *she* did it! and thinkin' that — when they asked me — I took it upon *myself!* I did n't allow to ring *you* into this, Jack! I thought — I thought — thet — it 'ud all be one — thet they 'd hang me up afore this — I did, Jack, honest!"

"And you did n't kill Ramirez?"

"No."

"And you reckoned your wife did?"

"Yes."

"And you took the thing on yourself?"

"I did."

"*You* did!"

"I did!"

"You DID?"

"I did!"

Mr. Hamlin rolled over on his back, and began to whistle "When the springtime comes, gentle Annie!" as the only way of expressing his inordinate contempt for the whole proceeding.

Gabriel slowly slid his hand under Mr. Hamlin's helpless back, and under pretext of arranging his bandages, lifted him in his arms like a truculent babe. "Jack," he said softly, "ef thet picter of yours — that colored woman" —

"Which?" said Jack fiercely.

"I mean — thet purty creature — ef she and you hed been married, and you 'd found out accidental-like that she 'd fooled ye — more belike, Jack," he added hastily, "o' your own foolishness — than her little game — and" —

"*That* woman was a lady," interrupted Jack savagely, "and your wife 's a" — But he paused, looking into Gabriel's face, and then added, "Oh, git! will you? Leave me alone! 'I want to be an angel and with the angels stand.'"

"And thet woman hez a secret," continued Gabriel, unmindful of the interruption, "and bein' hounded by the man az knows it, up and kills him, ye would n't let thet woman — that poor pooty creeture — suffer for it! No, Jack! Ye would rather p'int your own toes up to the sky than do it. It ain't in ye, Jack, and it ain't in me, so help me God!"

"This is all very touching, Mr. Conroy, and does credit, sir, to your head and heart, and I kin feel it drawing Hall's ball out of my leg while you 're talkin'," said Jack, with his black eyes evading Gabriel's and wandering to the entrance of the tunnel. "What time is it, you d—d old fool; ain't it dark enough yet to git outer this hole?" He groaned, and after a pause added fiercely, "How do you know your wife did it?"

Gabriel swiftly, and for him even concisely, related the *events of the day* from his meeting with Ramirez in the

morning, to the time that he had stumbled upon the body of Victor Ramirez on his return to keep the appointment at his wife's written request.

Jack only interrupted him once to inquire why, after discovering the murder, he had not gone on to keep his appointment.

"I thought it wa'n't of no use," said Gabriel simply; "I did n't want to let her see I knowed it."

Hamlin groaned. "If you had you would have found her in the company of the man who *did* do it, you doddering old idiot!"

"What man?" asked Gabriel.

"The first man you saw your wife with that morning; the man I ought to be helping now, instead of lyin' here."

"You don't mean to allow, Jack, ez you reckon she *did* n't do it?" asked Gabriel, in alarm.

"I do," said Hamlin coolly.

"Then what did she reckon to let on by that note?" said Gabriel, with a sudden look of cunning.

"Don't know," returned Jack, "like as not, being a d—d fool, you did n't read it right! Hand it over and let me see it."

Gabriel (hesitatingly): "I can't."

Hamlin: "You can't?"

Gabriel (apologetically): "I tore it up!"

Hamlin (with frightful deliberation): "You DID?"

Gabriel: "I did."

Jack (after a long crushing silence): "Were you ever under medical treatment for these spells?"

Gabriel (with great simplicity and submission): "They allers used to allow I waz queer."

Hamlin (after another pause): "Has Pete Dumphy got anything agin you?"

Gabriel (surprisedly): "No."

Hamlin (languidly): "It was his right-hand man, his

agent at Wingdam, that started up the vigilantes! I heard him, and saw him in the crowd hounding 'em on."

Gabriel (simply): "I reckon you're out thar, Jack; Dumphy 's my friend. It was him that first gin me the money to open this yer mine. And I 'm his superintendent!"

Jack: "Oh!" (After another pause): "Is there any first-class lunatic asylum in this county where they would take in two men, one an incurable, and the other sufferin' from a gunshot wound brought on by playin' with firearms?"

Gabriel (with a deep sigh): "Ye mus' n't talk, Jack; ye must be quiet till dark."

Jack, dragged down by pain, and exhausted in the intervals of each paroxysm, was quiescent.

Gradually the faint light that had filtered through the brush and débris before the tunnel faded quite away, and a damp charnel-house chill struck through the limbs of the two refugees, and made them shiver; the flow of water from the dripping walls seemed to have increased; Gabriel's experienced eye had already noted that the earthquake had apparently opened seams in the gully and closed up one of the leads. He carefully laid his burden down again, and crept to the opening. The distant hum of voices and occupation had ceased, the sun was setting; in a few moments, calculating on the brief twilight of the mountain region, it would be dark, and they might with safety leave their hiding-place. As he was returning, he noticed a slant beam of light, hitherto unobserved, crossing the tunnel from an old drift. Examining it more closely, Gabriel was amazed to find that during the earthquake a "cave" had taken place in the drift, possibly precipitated by the shock, disclosing the more surprising fact that there had been a previous slight but positive excavation on the *hillside, above* the tunnel, that antedated any record of

One Horse Gulch known to Gabriel. He was perfectly familiar with every foot of the hillside, and the existence of this ancient prospecting "hole" had never been even suspected by him. While he was still gazing at the opening, his foot struck against some glittering metallic substance. He stooped and picked up a small tin can, not larger than a sardine-box, hermetically sealed and soldered, in which some inscription had been traced, but which the darkness of the tunnel prevented his deciphering. In the faint hope that it might contain something of benefit to his companion, Gabriel returned to the opening, and even ventured to step beyond its shadow. But all attempts to read the inscription were in vain. He opened the box with a sharp stone; it contained, to his great disappointment, only a memorandum book and some papers. He swept them into the pocket of his blouse, and reëntered the tunnel. He had not been absent altogether more than five minutes, but when he reached the place where he had left Jack, he was gone!

CHAPTER IX

IN WHICH HECTOR ARISES FROM THE DITCH

He stood for a moment breathless and paralyzed with surprise; then he began slowly and deliberately to examine the tunnel step by step. When he had proceeded a hundred feet from the spot, to his great relief he came upon Jack Hamlin, sitting upright in a side drift. His manner was feverish and excited, and his declaration that he had not moved from the place where Gabriel had left him at once was accepted by the latter as the aberration of incipient inflammation and fever. When Gabriel stated that it was time to go, he replied, "Yes," and added with such significance that his business with the murderer of Victor Ramirez was now over, and that he was ready to enter the lunatic asylum at once, that Gabriel with great precipitation lifted him in his arms and carried him without delay from the tunnel. Once more in the open air the energies of both men seemed to rally; Jack became as a mere feather in Gabriel's powerful arms, and even forgot his querulous opposition to being treated as a helpless child, while Gabriel trod the familiar banks of the ditch, climbed the long ascent and threaded the aisles of the pillared pines of Reservoir Hill with the free, experienced feet of the mountaineer. Here Gabriel knew he was safe until daybreak, and gathered together some withered pine boughs and its fragrant tassels for a couch for his helpless companion. And here, as he feared, fever set in; the respiration of the wounded man grew quick and hurried; he *began to talk* rapidly and incoherently, of Olly, of Rami-

rez, of the beautiful girl whose picture hung upon his breast, of Gabriel himself, and finally of a stranger who was, as it seemed to him, his sole auditor, the gratuitous coinage of his excited fancy. Once or twice he raised his voice to a shout, and then to Gabriel's great alarm suddenly he began to sing, and before Gabriel could place his hand upon his mouth he had trolled out the verse of a popular ballad. The rushing river below them gurgled, beat its bars, and sang an accompaniment; the swaying pine sighed and creaked in unison; the patient stars above them stared and bent breathlessly; and then to Gabriel's exalted consciousness an echo of the wounded man's song arose from the gulch below! For a moment he held his breath with an awful mingling of joy and fear. Was he going mad too? or was it really the voice of little Olly? The delirious man beside him answered his query with another verse; the antiphonal response rose again from the valley. Gabriel hesitated no longer, but with feverish hands gathered a few dried twigs and pine cones into a pile, and touched a match to them. At the next moment they flashed a beacon to the sky; in another there was a crackling of the underbrush and the hurried onset of two figures, and before the slow Gabriel could recover from his astonishment, Olly flew, panting, to his arms, while her companion, the faithful Pete, sank breathlessly beside his wounded and insensible master.

Olly was first to find her speech. That speech, after the unfailing instincts of her sex in moments of excitement, was the instant arraignment of somebody else as the cause of that excitement, and at once put the whole universe on the defensive.

"Why did n't you send word where you was?" she said impatiently, "and wot did you have it so dark for, and up a steep hill, and leavin' me alone at Wingdam, and why did n't *you call without* singin'?"

And then Gabriel, after the fashion of *his* sex, ignored all but the present, and holding Olly in his arms, said, —

"It 's my little girl, ain't it? Come to her own brother Gabe! Bless her!"

Whereat Mr. Hamlin, after the fashion of lunatics of any sex, must needs be consistent, and break out again into song.

"He 's loony, Olly, what with fever along o' bein' shot in the leg a-savin' me, ez iz n't worth savin'," explained Gabriel apologetically. "It was him ez did the singin'."

Then Olly, still following the feminine instinct, at once deserted conscious rectitude for indefensible error, and flew to Mr. Hamlin's side.

"Oh, where is he hurt, Pete? Is he going to die?"

And Pete, suspicious of any medication but his own, replied doubtfully, "He looks bad, Miss Olly, dat 's a fac' — but now bein' in my han's, bress de Lord A'mighty, and we able to minister to him, we hopes fur de bess. Your brudder meant well, is a fair-meanin' man, miss — a toll'able nuss, but he ain't got the peerfeshn'l knowledge dat Mars Jack in de habit o' gettin'." Here Pete unslung from his shoulders a wallet, and proceeded to extract therefrom a small medicine-case, with the resigned air of the family physician, who has been called full late to remedy the practice of rustic empiricism.

"How did ye come yer?" asked Gabriel of Olly, when he had submissively transferred his wounded charge to Pete. "What made ye allow I was hidin' yer? How did ye reckon to find me? But ye was allus peart and onhanded, Olly," he suggested, gazing admiringly at his sister.

"When I woke up at Wingdam, after Jack went away, who should I find, Gabe, but Lawyer Maxwell standin' thar, and askin' me a heap o' questions. I supposed you 'd been makin' a fool o' yourself agin, Gabe, and afore I let *on* thet I knowed a word, I jist made him tell me every*thin' about you*, Gabe, and it was orful\ and you bein'

arrested fur murder, ez would n't harm a fly, let alone that Mexican ez I never liked, Gabe, and all this comes of tendin' his legs instead o' lookin' arter me. And all them questions waz about July, and whether she was n't your enemy, and if they ever waz a woman, Gabe, ez waz sweet on you, you know it was July! And all thet kind o' foolishness! And then when he could n't get ennything out o' me agin July, he allowed to Pete that he must take me right to you, fur he said ther was talk o' the vigilantes gettin' hold o' ye afore the trial, and he was goin' to get an order to take you outer the county, and he reckoned they would n't dare to tech ye if I waz with ye, Gabe — and I 'd like to see 'em try it! and he allowed to Pete that he must take me right to you! And Pete — and thar ain't a whiter nigger livin' than that ole man — said he would — reckonin', you know, to find Jack, as he allowed to me they 'd hev to kill afore they got you — and he came down yer with me. And when we got yer — you was off — and the sheriff gone — and the vigilantes — what with bein' killed, the biggest o' them, by the earthquake — what was orful, Gabe, but we bein' on the road did n't get to feel! — jest scared outer their butes! And then a Chinyman gins us your note" —

"My note?" interrupted Gabriel; "I did n't send ye any note."

"Then *his* note," said Olly impatiently, pointing to Hamlin, "sayin', 'You 'll find your friends on Conroy's Hill!' Don't you see, Gabe?" continued Olly, stamping her foot in fury at her brother's slowness of comprehension; "and so we came and heard Jack singin', and a mighty foolish thing it was to do, and yer we are!"

"But he did n't send any note, Olly," persisted Gabriel.

"Well, you awful old Gabe, what difference does it make *who* sent it?" continued the practical Olly; "here we are, along o' thet note, and," she added, feeling in her pocket, "there 's *the* note!"

She handed Gabriel a small slip of paper with the penciled words, "You 'll find your friends waiting for you to-night on Conroy's Hill."

The handwriting was unfamiliar, but even if it were Jack's, how did *he* manage to send it without his knowledge? He had not lost sight of Jack except during the few moments he had reconnoitred the mouth of the tunnel, since they had escaped from the court-house. Gabriel was perplexed; in the presence of this anonymous note he was confused and speechless, and could only pass his hand helplessly across his forehead. "But it 's all right now, Gabe," continued Olly reassuringly; "the vigilantes hev run away — what was left of them; the sheriff ain't to be found nowhar! This yer earthquake hez frightened everybody outer the idea of huntin' ye — nobody talks of ennything but the earthquake; they even say, Gabe — I forgot to tell ye — that our claim on Conroy Hill has busted, too, and the mine ain't worth shucks now! But there 's no one to interfere with us now, Gabe! And we 're goin' to get into a waggin that Pete hez bespoke for us at the head of Reservoir Gulch to-morrow mornin' at sun-up! And then Pete sez we kin git down to Stockton and 'Frisco and out to a place called San Antonio, that the devil himself would n't think o' goin' to, and thar we kin stay, me and you and Jack, until this whole thing has blown over and Jack gits well again and July comes back."

Gabriel, still holding the hand of his sister, dared not tell her of the suspicions of Lawyer Maxwell, regarding her sister-in-law's complicity in this murder, nor Jack's conviction of her infidelity, and he hesitated. But after a pause he suggested, with a consciousness of great discretion and artfulness, "Suppose that July does n't come back?"

"Look yer, Gabe," said Olly suddenly, "ef yer goin' to be thet foolish and ridiklus agin, I 'll jess quit. Ez if thet *woman would ever* leave ye!" (Gabriel groaned inwardly.)

"Why, when she hears o' this, wild hosses could n't keep her from ye. Don't be a mule, Gabe, — don't!" And Gabriel was dumb.

Meantime, under the influence of some anodyne which Pete had found in his medicine-chest, Mr. Hamlin became quiet and pretermitted his vocal obligato. Gabriel, whose superb physical adjustment no mental excitement could possibly overthrow, and whose regular habits were never broken by anxiety, nodded, even while holding Olly's hand, and in due time slept, and I regret to say — writing of a hero — snored. After a while Olly herself succumbed to the drowsy coolness of the night, and wrapped in Mr. Hamlin's shawl, pillowed her head upon her brother's broad breast and slept too. Only Pete remained to keep the watch, he being comparatively fresh and strong, and declaring that the condition of Mr. Hamlin required his constant attention.

It was after midnight that Olly dreamed a troubled dream. She thought that she was riding with Mr. Hamlin to seek her brother, when she suddenly came upon a crowd of excited men who were bearing Gabriel to the gallows. She thought that she turned to Mr. Hamlin frantically for assistance, when she saw to her horror that his face had changed — that it was no longer he who sat beside her, but a strange, wild-looking, haggard man, — a man whose face was old and pinched, but whose gray hair was discolored by a faded dye that had worn away, leaving the original color in patches, and the antique foppery of whose dress was deranged by violent exertion, and grimy with the dust of travel, — a dandy whose strapped trousers of a bygone fashion were ridiculously loosened in one leg, whose high stock was unbuckled and awry! She awoke with a start. Even then her dream was so vivid that it seemed to her this face was actually bending over her with such a pathetic earnestness and inquiry that she called aloud. It was some

minutes before Pete came to her, but as he averred, albeit somewhat incoherently and rubbing his eyes to show that he had not closed them, that he had never slept a wink, and that it was impossible for any stranger to have come upon them without his knowledge, Olly was obliged to accept it all as a dream! But she did not sleep again. She watched the moon slowly sink behind the serrated pines of Conroy's Hill; she listened to the crackling tread of strange animals in the underbrush, to the far-off rattle of wheels on the Wingdam turnpike, until the dark outline of the tree trunks returned, and with the cold fires of the mountain sunrise the chilly treetops awoke to winged life and the twitter of birds, while the faint mists of the river lingered with the paling moon like tired sentinels for the relief of the coming day. And then Olly awoke her companions. They struggled back into consciousness with characteristic expression, Gabriel slowly and apologetically, as of one who had overslept himself; Jack Hamlin violently and aggressively, as if some unfair advantage had been taken of his human weakness that it was necessary to combat at once. I am sorry to say that his recognition of Pete was accompanied by a degree of profanity and irreverence that was dangerous to his own physical weakness. "And you had to traipse down yer, sniffin' about my tracks, you black-and-tan idiot," continued Mr. Hamlin, raising himself on his arm, "and after I'd left everything all straight at Wingdam — and jest as I was beginning to reform and lead a new life! How do, Olly? You 'll excuse my not rising. Come and kiss me! If that nigger of mine has let you want for anything, jest tell me and I'll discharge him. Well! hang it all! what are you waitin' for? Here it 's daybreak and we 've got to get down to the head of Reservoir Gulch. Come, little children, the picnic is over!"

Thus adjured, Gabriel rose, and lifting Mr. Hamlin in his arms with infinite care and tenderness, headed the

quaint procession. Mr. Hamlin, perhaps recognizing some absurdity in the situation, forbore exercising his querulous profanity on the man who held him helpless as an infant, and Olly and Pete followed slowly behind.

Their way led down Reservoir Cañon, beautiful, hopeful, and bracing in the early morning air. A few birds, awakened by the passing tread, started into song a moment, and then were still. With a cautious gentleness, habitual to the man, Gabriel forbore, as he strode along, to step upon the few woodland blossoms yet left to the dry summer woods. There was a strange fragrance in the air, the light odors liberated from a thousand nameless herbs, the faint melancholy spicing of dead leaves. There was, moreover, that sense of novelty which nature always brings with the dawn in deep forests; a fancy that during the night the earth had been created anew, and was fresh from the Maker's hand, as yet untried by burden or tribulation, and guiltless of a past. And so it seemed to the little caravan — albeit fleeing from danger and death — that yesterday and its fears were far away, or had, in some unaccountable way, shrunk behind them in the west with the swiftly dwindling night. Olly once or twice strayed from the trail to pick an opening flower or lingering berry; Pete hummed to himself the fragment of an old camp-meeting song.

And so they walked on, keeping the rosy dawn and its promise before them. From time to time the sound of far-off voices came to them faintly. Slowly the light quickened; morning stole down the hills upon them stealthily, and at last the entrance of the cañon became dimly outlined. Olly uttered a shout and pointed to a black object moving backward and forward before the opening. It was the wagon and team awaiting them. Olly's shout was answered by a whistle from the driver, and they quickened their pace joyfully; in another moment they would be beyond the reach *of danger.*

Suddenly a voice that seemed to start from the ground before them called on Gabriel to stop. He did so unconsciously, drawing Hamlin closer to him with one hand, and with the other making a broad protecting sweep toward Olly. And then a figure rose slowly from the ditch at the roadside and barred their passage.

It was only a single man! A small man bespattered with the slime of the ditch and torn with brambles; a man exhausted with fatigue and tremulous with nervous excitement, but still erect and threatening. A man whom Gabriel and Hamlin instantly recognized, even through his rags and exhaustion! It was Joe Hall — the sheriff of Calaveras! He held a pistol in his right hand, even while his left exhaustedly sought the support of a tree! By a common instinct both men saw that while the hand was feeble the muzzle of the weapon covered them.

"Gabriel Conroy, I want you," said the apparition.

"He 's got us lined! Drop me," whispered Hamlin hastily, — "drop me! I 'll spoil his aim."

But Gabriel, by a swift, dexterous movement that seemed incompatible with his usual deliberation, instantly transferred Hamlin to his other arm, and with his burden completely shielded, presented his own right shoulder squarely to the muzzle of Hall's revolver.

"Gabriel Conroy, you are my prisoner," repeated the voice.

Gabriel did not move. But over his shoulder as a rest dropped the long shining barrel of Jack's own favorite dueling-pistol, and over it glanced the bright eye of its crippled owner. The issue was joined!

There was a deathlike silence.

"Go on!" said Jack quietly. "Keep cool, Joe. For if *you* miss him, you 're gone in; and hit or miss, I 've got *you sure!*"

The barrel of Hall's pistol wavered a moment, from

physical weakness but not from fear. The great heart behind it, though broken, was undaunted.

"It's all right," said the voice fatefully. "It's all right, Jack! Ye'll kill me, I know! But ye can't help sayin' arter all that I did my duty to Calaveras as the sheriff, and 'specially to them twenty-five men ez elected me over Boggs! I ain't goin' to let ye pass. I've been on this yer hunt, up and down this cañon, all night. Hevin' no possy I reckon I've got to die yer in my tracks. All right! But ye'll git into thet wagon over my dead body, Jack — over my dead body, sure."

Even as he spoke these words he straightened himself to his full height — which was not much, I fear — and steadied himself by the tree, his weapon still advanced and pointing at Gabriel, but with such an evident and hopeless contrast between his determination and his evident inability to execute it that his attitude impressed his audience less with its heroism than its half-pathetic absurdity.

Mr. Hamlin laughed. But even then he suddenly felt the grasp of Gabriel relax, found himself slipping to his companion's feet, and the next moment was deposited carefully but ignominiously on the ground by Gabriel, who strode quietly and composedly up to the muzzle of the sheriff's pistol.

"I am ready to go with ye, Mr. Hall," he said gently, putting the pistol aside with a certain large indifferent wave of the hand, — "ready to go with ye — now — at onct! But I've one little favor to ax ye. This yer pore young man, ez yur wounded, unbeknownst," he said, pointing to Hamlin, who was writhing and gritting his teeth in helpless rage and fury, "ez not to be tuk with me, nor for me! Thar ain't nothin' to be done to him. He hez been dragged inter this fight. But I'm ready to go with ye now, Mr. Hall, and am sorry you got into the troubil along o' me."

BOOK VII

THE BED ROCK

CHAPTER I

IN THE TRACK OF A STORM

A QUARTER of an hour before the messenger of Peter Dumphy had reached Poinsett's office, Mr. Poinsett had received a more urgent message. A telegraph dispatched from San Antonio had been put into his hands. Its few curt words, more significant to an imaginative man than rhetorical expression, ran as follows: —

Mission church destroyed. Father Felipe safe. Blessed Trinity in ruins and Dolores missing. My house spared. Come at once.

MARIA SEPULVIDA.

The following afternoon at four o'clock Arthur Poinsett reached San Geronimo, within fifteen miles of his destination. Here the dispatch was confirmed with some slight local exaggeration.

"Saints and devils! There is no longer a St. Anthony! The temblor has swallowed him!" said the innkeeper sententiously. "It is the end of all! Such is the world. Thou wilt find stones on stones instead of houses, Don Arturo. Wherefore another glass of the brandy of France, *or the whiskey of the* American, as thou dost prefer. But

of San Antonio — nothing! — absolutely — perfectly — truly nothing!"

In spite of this cheering prophecy, Mr. Poinsett did not wait for the slow diligence, but mounting a fleet mustang dashed off in quest of the missing mission. He was somewhat relieved at the end of an hour by the far-off flash of the sea, the rising of the dark green fringe of the mission orchard and encinal, and above it the white dome of one of the mission towers. But at the next moment Arthur checked his horse and rubbed his eyes in wonder. Where was the other tower? He put spurs to his horse again and dashed off at another angle, and again stopped and gazed. *There was but one tower remaining.* The mission church must have been destroyed!

Perhaps it was this discovery, perhaps it was some instinct stronger than this; but when Arthur had satisfied himself of this fact he left the direct road, which would have brought him to the mission, and diverged upon the open plain towards the Rancho of the Blessed Trinity. A fierce wind from the sea swept the broad llano and seemed to oppose him, step by step, — a wind so persistent and gratuitous that it appeared to Arthur to possess a moral quality, and as such was to be resisted and overcome by his superior will. Here, at least, all was unchanged; here was the dead, flat monotony of land and sky. Here was the brittle, harsh stubble of the summer fields, sun-baked and wind-dried; here were the long stretches of silence, from which even the harrying wind made no opposition or complaint; here were the formless specks of slowly moving cattle, even as he remembered them before. A momentary chill came over him as he recalled his own perilous experience on these plains, a momentary glow suffused his cheek as he thought of his rescue by the lovely but cold recluse. Again he heard the name of "Philip" softly whispered in his ears, again he felt the flood of old

memories sweep over him as he rode, even as he had felt them when he lay that day panting upon the earth. And yet Arthur had long since convinced his mind that he was mistaken in supposing that Doña Dolores had addressed him at that extreme moment as "Philip;" he had long since believed it was a trick of his disordered and exhausted brain; the conduct of Dolores towards himself, habitually restrained by grave courtesy, never justified him in directly asking the question, nor suggested any familiarity that might have made it probable. She had never alluded to it again — but had apparently forgotten it. Not so Arthur! He had often gone over that memorable scene, with a strange, tormenting pleasure that was almost a pain. It was the one incident of his life for whose poetry he was not immediately responsible — the one genuine heart-thrill whose sincerity he had not afterwards stopped to question in his critical fashion, the one enjoyment that had not afterwards appeared mean and delusive. And now the heroine of this episode was missing, and he might never perhaps see her again! And yet when he first heard the news he was conscious of a strange sense of relief — rather let me say of an awakening from a dream, that though delicious, had become dangerous and might unfit him for the practical duties of his life. Doña Dolores had never affected him as a real personage; at least the interest he felt in her was, he had always considered, due to her relations to some romantic condition of his mind, and her final disappearance from the plane of his mental vision was only the exit of an actress from the mimic stage. It seemed only natural that she should disappear as mysteriously as she came. There was no shock even to the instincts of his ordinary humanity; it was no catastrophe involving loss of life or even suffering to the subject or spectator.

Such at least was Mr. Poinsett's analysis of his own

mental condition on the receipt of Doña Maria's telegram. It was the cool self-examination of a man who believed himself cold-blooded and selfish, superior to the weakness of ordinary humanity, and yet was conscious of neither pride nor disgrace in the belief. Yet when he diverged from his direct road to the mission, and turned his horse's head toward the home of Doña Dolores, he was conscious of a new impulse and anxiety that was stronger than his reason. Unable as he was to resist it, he still took some satisfaction in believing that it was nearly akin to that feeling which years before had driven him back to Starvation Camp in quest of the survivors. Suddenly his horse recoiled with a bound that would have unseated a less skillful rider. Directly across his path stretched a chasm in the level plain, thirty feet broad and as many feet in depth, and at its bottom in undistinguishable confusion lay the wreck of the corral of the Blessed Trinity!

Except for the enormous size and depth of this fissure, Arthur might have mistaken it for the characteristic cracks in the sun-burnt plain which the long dry summer had wrought upon its surface, some of which were so broad as to task the agility of his horse. But a second glance convinced him of the different character of the phenomenon. The earth had not cracked asunder or separated, but had sunk. The width of the chasm below was nearly equal to the width above; the floor of this valley in miniature was carpeted by the same dry, brittle herbs and grasses which grew upon the plain around him.

In the preoccupation of the last hour he had forgotten the distance he had traversed. He had evidently ridden faster than he had imagined. But if this was really the corral, the walls of the rancho should now be in sight at the base of the mountain! He turned in that direction. Nothing was to be seen! Only the monotonous plain stretched before him, vast and unbroken. Between the

chasm where he stood and the falda of the first low foot-hills neither roof nor wall nor ruin rose above the dull, dead level!

An ominous chill ran through his veins, and for an instant the reins slipped through his relaxed fingers. Good God! Could this have been what Doña Maria meant, or had there been a later convulsion of nature? He looked around him. The vast, far-stretching plain, desolate and trackless as the shining ocean beyond, took upon itself an awful likeness to that element! Standing on the brink of the revealed treachery of that yawning chasm, Arthur Poinsett read the fate of the rancho. In the storm that had stirred the depths of this motionless level, the rancho and its miserable inmates had *foundered* and gone down!

Arthur's first impulse was to push on towards the scene of the disaster, in the vague hope of rendering some service. But the chasm before him was impassable, and seemed to continue to the sea beyond. Then he reflected that the catastrophe briefly told in Doña Maria's dispatch had happened twenty-four hours before, and help was perhaps useless now. He cursed the insane impulse that had brought him here, aimlessly and without guidance, and left him powerless even to reach the object of his quest. If he had only gone first to the mission, asked the advice and assistance of Father Felipe, or learned at least the full details of the disaster! He uttered an oath, rare to his usual calm expression, and wheeling his horse, galloped fiercely back towards the mission.

Night had deepened over the plain. With the going down of the sun a fog that had been stealthily encompassing the coast-line stole with soft step across the shining beach, dulled its lustre, and then moved slowly and solemnly upon the plain, blotting out the Point of Pines, at first salient with its sparkling lighthouse, but now *undistinguishable from* the gray sea above and below, until it

reached the galloping horse and its rider, and then, as it seemed to Arthur, isolated them from the rest of the world — from even the penciled outlines of the distant foothills, that it at last sponged from the blue-gray slate before him. At times the far-off tolling of a fog-bell came faintly to his ear, but all sound seemed to be blotted out by the fog; even the rapid fall of his horse's hoofs was muffled and indistinct. By degrees the impression that he was riding in a dream overcame him, and was accepted by him without questioning or deliberation.

It seemed to be a consistent part of the dream or vision when he rode — or rather, as it seemed to him, was borne by the fog — into the outlying fields and lanes of the mission. A few lights, with a nimbus of fog around them, made the narrow street of the town appear still more ghostly and unreal as he plunged through its obscurity towards the plaza and church. Even by the dim gray light he could see that one of the towers had fallen, and that the eastern wing and refectory were a mass of shapeless ruin. And what would at another time have excited his surprise now only struck him as a natural part of his dream, — the church a blaze of light and filled with thronging worshipers! Still possessed by his strange fancy, Arthur Poinsett dismounted, led his horse beneath the shed beside the remaining tower, and entered the building. The body and nave of the church were intact; the outlandish paintings still hung from the walls; the waxen effigies of the Blessed Virgin and the saints still leaned from their niches, yellow and lank, and at the high altar Father Felipe was officiating. As he entered a dirge broke from the choir; he saw that the altar and its offerings were draped in black, and in the first words uttered by the priest Arthur recognized the mass for the dead! The feverish impatience that had filled his breast and heightened the color of his cheeks for the last hour was gone. He sunk upon a bench beside

one of the worshipers and buried his face in his hands. The voice of the organ rose again faintly; the quaint-voiced choir awoke, the fumes of incense filled the church, and the monotonous accents of the priest fell soothingly upon his ear, and Arthur seemed to sleep. I say seemed to sleep, for ten minutes later he came to himself with a start as if awakening from a troubled dream, with the voice of Padre Felipe in his ear, and the soft, caressing touch of Padre Felipe on his shoulder. The worshipers had dispersed, the church was dark save a few candles still burning on the high altar, and for an instant he could not recall himself.

"I knew you would come, son," said Padre Felipe; "but where is she? Did you bring her with you?"

"Who?" asked Arthur, striving to recall his scattered senses.

"Who? Saints preserve us, Don Arturo! She who sent for you — Doña Maria! Did you not get her message?"

Arthur replied that he had only just arrived, and had at once hastened to the mission. For some reason that he was ashamed to confess he did not say that he had tried to reach the Rancho of the Blessed Trinity, nor did he admit that he had forgotten for the last two hours even the existence of Doña Maria. "You were having a mass for the dead, Father Felipe? — you have then suffered here?"

He paused anxiously, for in his then confused state of mind he doubted how much of his late consciousness had been real or visionary.

"Mother of God," said Father Felipe, eying Arthur curiously. "You know not then for whom was this mass? You know not that a saint has gone — that Doña Dolores has at last met her reward?"

[redacted] heard — that is, Doña Maria's dispatch said — [redacted]ered Arthur, feeling, with a

new and unsupportable disbelief in himself, that his face was very pale and his voice uncertain.

"Missing!" echoed Father Felipe, with the least trace of impatience in his voice, — "missing! She will be found when the Rancho of the Blessed Trinity is restored — when the ruins of the casa, sunk fifty feet below the surface, are brought again to the level of the plain. Missing, Don Arturo! — ah! — missing indeed! — forever! always, entirely!"

Moved perhaps by something in Arthur's face, Padre Felipe sketched in a few graphic pictures the details of the catastrophe already forecast by Arthur. It was a repetition of the story of the sunken corral. The earthquake had not only leveled the walls of the Rancho of the Blessed Trinity, but had opened a grave-like chasm fifty feet below it, and none had escaped to tell the tale. The faithful vaqueros had rushed from the trembling and undulating plain to the rancho, only to see it topple into a yawning abyss that opened to receive it. Don Juan, Doña Dolores, the faithful Manuela, and Alejandro, the major-domo, with a dozen peons and retainers, went down with the crumbling walls. No one had escaped. Was it not possible to dig in the ruins for the bodies? Mother of God! had not Don Arturo been told that the earth at the second shock had closed over the sunken ruins, burying beyond mortal resurrection all that the rancho contained? They were digging, but hopelessly — a dozen men. They might — weeks hence — discover the bodies — but who knows?

The meek, fatalistic way that Father Felipe accepted the final doom of Doña Dolores exasperated Arthur beyond bounds. In San Francisco a hundred men would have been digging night and day in the mere chance of recovering the buried family. Here — But Arthur remembered the sluggish, helpless retainers of Salvatierra, the dreadful fatalism which affected them on the occurrence of this mys-

terious catastrophe, even as shown in the man before him, their accepted guide and leader — and shuddered. Could anything be done? Could he not, with Dumphy's assistance, procure a gang of men from San Francisco? And then came the instinct of caution, always powerful with a nature like Arthur's. If these people, most concerned in the loss of their friends, their relations, accepted it so hopelessly, what right had he — a mere stranger — to interfere?

"But come, my son," said Padre Felipe, laying his large soft hand parentally on Arthur's shoulder. "Come, come with me to my rooms. Thanks to the Blessed Virgin, I have still shelter and a roof to offer you. Ah!" he added, stroking Arthur's riding-coat, and examining critically as if he had been a large child, "what have we — what is this, eh? You are wet with this heretic fog — eh? Your hands are cold, and your cheeks hot. You have fatigue! Possibly — most possibly, hunger! No! no! It is so. Come with me, come!" and drawing Arthur's passive arm through his own, he opened the vestry door, and led him across the little garden, choked with débris and plaster of the fallen tower, to a small adobe building that had been the mission schoolroom. It was now hastily fitted up as Padre Felipe's own private apartment and meditative cell. A bright fire burned in the low, oven-like hearth. Around the walls hung various texts illustrating the achievement of youthful penmanship with profound religious instruction. At the extremity of the room there was a small organ. Midway and opposite the hearth was a deep embrasured window — the window at which, two weeks before, Mr. Jack Hamlin had beheld the Doña Dolores. "She spent much of her time here, dear child, in the instruction of the young," said Father Felipe, taking a huge pinch of snuff, and applying a large red bandana handkerchief to his eyes and nose. "It is her best monument! Thanks to her largess — and she *was ever free-handed*, Don Arturo, to the church — the

foundation of the Convent of our Lady of Sorrows, her own patron saint, thou seest here. Thou knowest, possibly — most possibly as her legal adviser — that long ago, by her will, the whole of the Salvatierra estate is a benefaction to the Holy Church, eh?"

"No, I don't!" said Arthur suddenly, awakening with a glow of Protestant and heretical objection that was new to him, and eying Padre Felipe with the first glance of suspicion he had ever cast upon that venerable ecclesiastic. "No, sir, I never heard any intimation or suggestion of the kind from the late Doña Dolores. On the contrary, I was engaged" —

"Pardon — pardon me, my son," interrupted Father Felipe, taking another large pinch of snuff. "It is not now, scarce twenty-four hours since the dear child was translated — not in her masses and while her virgin strewments are not yet faded — that we will talk of this" (he blew his nose violently). "No! All in good time — thou shalt see! But I have something here," he continued, turning over some letters and papers in his desk, — "something for you — possibly, most possibly, more urgent. It is a telegraphic dispatch for you, to my care."

He handed a yellow envelope to Arthur. But Poinsett's eyes were suddenly fixed upon a card which lay upon Padre Felipe's table, and which the padre's search for the dispatch had disclosed. Written across its face was the name of Colonel Culpepper Starbottle of Siskiyou! "Do you know that man?" asked Poinsett, holding the dispatch unopened in his hand, and pointing to the card.

Father Felipe took another pinch of snuff. "Possibly — most possibly! A lawyer, I think — I think! Some business of the church property! I have forgotten. But your dispatch, Don Arturo. What says it? It does not take you from us? And you — only an hour here?"

Father Felipe *paused*, and looking up innocently, found

the eyes of Arthur regarding him gravely. The two men examined each other intently. Arthur's eyes, at last, withdrew from the clear, unshrinking glance of Padre Felipe, unabashed but unsatisfied. A sudden recollection of the thousand and one scandals against the church, and wild stories of its far-reaching influence — a swift remembrance of the specious craft and cunning charged upon the religious order of which Padre Felipe was a member — scandals that he had hitherto laughed at as idle — flashed through his mind. Conscious that he was now putting himself in a guarded attitude before the man with whom he had always been free and outspoken, Arthur, after a moment's embarrassment that was new to him, turned for relief to the dispatch and opened it. In an instant it drove all other thoughts from his mind. Its few words were from Dumphy, and ran, characteristically, as follows: "Gabriel Conroy arrested for murder of Victor Ramirez. What do you propose? Answer."

Arthur rose to his feet. "When does the up stage pass through San Geronimo?" he asked hurriedly.

"At midnight!" returned Padre Felipe. "Surely, my son, you do not intend"—

"And it is now nine o'clock," continued Arthur, consulting his watch. "Can you procure me a fresh horse? It is of the greatest importance, father," he added, recovering his usual frankness.

"Ah! it is urgent! — it is a matter" — suggested the padre gently.

"Of life and death!" responded Arthur gravely.

Father Felipe rang a bell and gave some directions to a servant, while Arthur, seating himself at the table, wrote an answer to the dispatch. "I can trust you to send it as soon as possible to the telegraph office," he said, handing it to Father Felipe.

The padre took it in his hand, but glanced anxiously at

Arthur. "And Doña Maria?" he said hesitatingly; "you have not seen her yet! Surely you will stop at the Blessed Fisherman, if only for a moment, eh?"

Arthur drew his riding-coat and cape over his shoulders with a mischievous smile. "I am afraid not, father; I shall trust to you to explain that I was recalled suddenly, and that I had not time to call; knowing the fascinations of your society, father, she will not begrudge the few moments I have spent with you."

Before Father Felipe could reply the servant entered with the announcement that the horse was ready.

"Good-night, Father Felipe," said Arthur, pressing the priest's hands warmly, with every trace of his former suspiciousness gone. "Good-night. A thousand thanks for the horse. In speeding the parting guest" he added gravely, "you have perhaps done more for the health of my soul than you imagine. Good-night. Adios!"

With a light laugh in his ears, the vision of a graceful, erect figure, waving a salute from a phantom steed, an inward rush of the cold gray fog, and muffled clatter of hoofs over the mouldy and mossy marbles in the churchyard, Father Felipe parted from his guest. He uttered a characteristic adjuration, took a pinch of snuff, and closing the door, picked up the card of the gallant Colonel Starbottle and tossed it into the fire.

But the perplexities of the holy father ceased not with the night. At an early hour in the morning Doña Maria Sepulvida appeared before him at breakfast, suspicious, indignant, and irate.

"Tell me, Father Felipe," she said hastily, "did the Don Arturo pass the night here?"

"Truly no, my daughter," answered the padre cautiously. "He was here but for a little" —

"And he went away when?" interrupted Doña Maria.

"At nine."

"And where?" continued Doña Maria, with a rising color.

"To San Francisco, my child; it was business of great importance — but sit down, sit, little one! This impatience is of the devil, daughter; you must calm yourself."

"And do you know, Father Felipe, that he went away without coming *near me?*" continued Doña Maria in a higher key, scarcely heeding her ghostly confessor.

"Possibly, most possibly! But he received a dispatch — it was of the greatest importance."

"A dispatch!" repeated Doña Maria scornfully. "Truly — from whom?"

"I know not, my child," said Father Felipe, gazing at the pink cheeks, indignant eyes, and slightly swollen eyelids of his visitor; "this impatience — this anger is most unseemly."

"Was it from Mr. Dumphy?" reiterated Doña Maria, stamping her little foot.

Father Felipe drew back his chair. Through what unhallowed spell had this woman — once the meekest and humblest of wives — become the shrillest and most shrewish of widows? Was she about to revenge herself on Arthur for her long suffering with the late Don José? Father Felipe pitied Arthur now and prospectively.

"Are you going to tell me?" said Doña Maria tremulously, with alarming symptoms of hysteria.

"I believe it was from Mr. Dumphy," stammered Padre Felipe. "At least the answer Don Arturo gave me to send in reply — only these words, 'I will return at once' — was addressed to Mr. Dumphy. But I know not what was the message *he* received."

"You don't!" said Doña Maria, rising to her feet, with white in her cheek, fire in her eyes, and a stridulous pitch *in her voice,* — "you don't! Well, I will tell you! It *was the same* news that *this* brought." She took a tele-

graphic dispatch from her pocket and shook it in the face of Father Felipe. "There! read it! That was the news sent to him! That was the reason why he turned and ran away like a coward as he is! That was the reason why he never came near me, like a perjured traitor as he is! That is the reason why he came to you with his fastidious airs and his supercilious smile — and his — his — Oh, how I HATE HIM! That is why! — read it! read it! Why don't you read it?" (She had been gesticulating with it, waving it in the air wildly, and evading every attempt of Father Felipe to take it from her.) "Read it! Read it and see why! Read and see that I am ruined! — a beggar! — a cajoled and tricked and deceived woman — between these two villains, Dumphy and Mis — ter — Arthur — Poin — sett! Ah! Read it — or are you a traitor too? You and Dolores and all" —

She crumpled the paper in her hands, threw it on the floor, whitened suddenly round the lips, and then followed the paper as suddenly, at full length, in a nervous spasm at Father Felipe's feet. Father Felipe gazed, first at the paper and then at the rigid form of his friend. He was a man, — an old one, — with some experience of the sex, and I regret to say he picked up the *paper* first, and straightened *it* out. It was a telegraphic dispatch in the following words: —

Sorry to say telegram just received that earthquake has dropped out lead of Conroy Mine! Everything gone up! Can't make further advances or sell stock.

DUMPHY.

Father Felipe bent over Doña Maria and raised her in his arms. "Poor little one!" he said. "But I don't think Arthur knew it."

CHAPTER II

THE YELLOW ENVELOPE

For once, by a cruel irony, the adverse reports regarding the stability of the Conroy mine were true. A few stockholders still clung to the belief that it was a fabrication to depress the stock, but the fact as stated in Mr. Dumphy's dispatch to Doña Maria was in possession of the public. The stock fell to $35, to $30, to $10 — to nothing! An hour after the earthquake it was known in One Horse Gulch that the "lead" had "dropped" suddenly, and that a veil of granite of incalculable thickness had been upheaved between the seekers and the treasure, now lost in the mysterious depths below. The vein was gone! Where — no one could tell. There were various theories, more or less learned: there was one party who believed in the "subsidence" of the vein, another who believed in the "interposition" of the granite, but all tending to the same conclusion — the inaccessibility of the treasure. Science pointed with stony finger to the evidence of previous phenomena of the same character visible throughout the Gulch. But the grim "I told you so" of Nature was, I fear, no more satisfactory to the dwellers of One Horse Gulch than the ordinary prophetic distrust of common humanity.

The news spread quickly and far. It overtook several wandering Californians in Europe, and sent them to their bankers with anxious faces; it paled the cheeks of one or two guardians of orphan children, frightened several widows, drove a confidential clerk into shameful exile, and struck *Mr. Raynor in Boston* with such consternation, that people

for the first time suspected that he had backed his opinion of the resources of California with capital. Throughout the length and breadth of the Pacific slope it produced a movement of aggression which the earthquake had hitherto failed to cover. The probabilities of danger to life and limb by a recurrence of the shock had been dismissed from the public consideration, but this actual loss of characteristic property awakened the gravest anxiety. If Nature claimed the privilege of at any time withdrawing from that implied contract under which so many of California's best citizens had occupied and improved the country, it was high time that something should be done. Thus spake an intelligent and unfettered press. A few old residents talked of returning to the East.

During this excitement Mr. Dumphy bore himself toward the world generally with perfect self-confidence, and, if anything, an increased aggressiveness. His customers dared not talk of their losses before him, or exhibit a stoicism unequal to his own.

"It's a bad business," he would say. "What do you propose?" And as the one latent proposition in each human breast was the return of the money invested, and as no one dared to make that proposition, Mr. Dumphy was, as usual, triumphant. In this frame of mind Mr. Poinsett found him on his return from the Mission of San Antonio, the next morning.

"Bad news, I suppose, down there," said Mr. Dumphy briskly; "and I reckon the widow, though she has been luckier than her neighbors, don't feel particularly lively, eh? I'm devilish sorry for you, Poinsett, though, as a man, you can see that the investment was a good one. But you can't make a woman understand business. Eh? Well, the rancho's worth double the mortgage, I reckon. Eh? Ugly, ain't she — of course! Said she'd been swindled? That's like a woman! You and me know 'em! eh, Poin-

sett ?" Mr. Dumphy emitted his characteristic bark, and winked at his visitor.

Arthur looked up in unaffected surprise. "If you mean Mrs. Sepulvida," he said coldly, "I have n't seen her. I was on my way there when your telegram recalled me. I had some business with Padre Felipe."

"You don't know then that the Conroy mine has gone up with the earthquake, eh? Lead dropped out — eh? and the widow's fifty-six thousand?" — Here Mr. Dumphy snapped his finger and thumb, to illustrate the lame and impotent conclusion of Doña Maria's investment. "Don't you know that?"

"No," said Arthur, with perfect indifference and a languid abstraction that awed Mr. Dumphy more than anxiety, — "no, I don't. But I imagine that is n't the reason you telegraphed me."

"No," returned Dumphy, still eying Poinsett keenly for a possible clue to this singular and unheard-of apathy to the condition of the fortune of the woman his visitor was about to marry. "No — of course!"

"Well," said Arthur, with that dangerous quiet which was the only outward sign of interest and determination in his nature, — "I 'm going up to One Horse Gulch to offer my services as counsel to Gabriel Conroy. Now for the details of this murder, which, by the way, I don't believe Gabriel committed, unless he 's another man than the one I knew! After that you can tell me *your* business with me, for I don't suppose you telegraphed to me on his account solely. Of course, at first you felt it was to your interest to get him and his wife out of the way, now that Ramirez is gone. But now, if you please, let me know what *you* know about this murder."

Mr. Dumphy, thus commanded, and completely under the influence of Arthur's quiet will, briefly recounted the *particulars already* known to the reader, of which he had *been kept informed* by telegraph.

"He 's been recaptured," added Dumphy, "I learn by a later dispatch; and I don't reckon there 'll be another attempt to lynch him. I've managed *that*," he continued, with a return of his old self-assertion. "I've got some influence there!"

For the first time during the interview Arthur awoke from his preoccupation, and glanced keenly at Dumphy.

"Of course," he returned coolly, "I don't suppose you such a fool as to allow the only witness you have of your wife's death to be sacrificed — even if you believed that the impostor who was personating your wife had been charged with complicity in a capital crime and had fled from justice. You 're not such a fool as to believe that this Mrs. Conroy won't try to help her husband, that she evidently loves, by every means in her power — that she won't make use of any secret she may have that concerns you to save him and herself. No, Mr. Peter Dumphy," said Arthur significantly, — "no, you 're too much of a business man not to see that." As he spoke he noted the alternate flushing and paling of Mr. Dumphy's face, and read — I fear with the triumphant and instinctive consciousness of a superior intellect — that Mr. Dumphy *had* been precisely such a fool, and had failed!

"I reckon nobody will put much reliance on the evidence of a woman charged with a capital crime," said Mr. Dumphy, with a show of confidence he was far from feeling.

"Suppose that she and Gabriel both swear that *she* knows your abandoned wife, for instance; suppose that they both swear that she and you connived to personate Grace Conroy for the sake of getting the title to this mine; suppose that she alleges that she repented and married Gabriel, as she did, and suppose that they both admit the killing of this Ramirez — and assert that you were persecuting them through him, and still are; suppose that they

show that he forged a second grant to the mine — through *your* instigation ?"

"It 's a lie," interrupted Dumphy, starting to his feet; "he did it from jealousy."

"Can you *prove* his motives ?" said Arthur.

"But the grant was not in my favor — it was to some old Californian down in the Mission of San Antonio. I can prove that," said Dumphy excitedly.

"Suppose you can ! Nobody imagines you so indiscreet as to have had another grant conveyed to *you directly*, while you were negotiating with Gabriel for *his*. Don't be foolish ! *I* know you had nothing to do with the forged grant. I am only suggesting how you have laid yourself open to the charges of a woman of whom you are likely to make an enemy, and might have made an ally. If you calculate to revenge Ramirez, consider first if you care to have it proved that he was a confidential agent of yours — as they will, if you don't help *them*. Never mind whether they committed the murder. You are not their judge or accuser. You must help them for your own sake. No !" continued Arthur, after a pause, "congratulate yourself that the vigilance committee did not hang Gabriel Conroy, and that you have not to add revenge to the other motives of a desperate and scheming woman."

"But are you satisfied that Mrs. Conroy *is* really the person who stands behind Colonel Starbottle and personates my wife ?"

"I am," replied Arthur positively.

Dumphy hesitated a moment. Should he tell Arthur of Colonel Starbottle's interview with him, and the delivery and subsequent loss of the mysterious envelope ? Arthur read his embarrassment plainly, and precipitated his decision with a single question.

"Have you had any further interview with Colonel Starbottle ?"

Thus directly adjured, Dumphy hesitated no longer, but at once repeated the details of his late conversation with Starbottle, his successful bribery of the Colonel, the delivery of the sealed envelope under certain conditions, and its mysterious disappearance. Arthur heard him through with quiet interest, but when Mr. Dumphy spoke of the loss of the envelope, he fixed his eyes on Mr. Dumphy's with a significance that was unmistakable.

"You say you lost this envelope trusted to your honor!" said Arthur, with slow and insulting deliberation. "Lost it, without having opened it or learned its contents? That was very unfortunate, Mr. Dumphy, ve-ry un-for-tu-nate!"

The indignation of an honorable man at the imputation of some meanness foreign to his nature is weak compared with the anger of a rascal accused of an offense which he might have committed, but did n't. Mr. Dumphy turned almost purple! It was so evident that he had not been guilty of concealing the envelope, and did not know its contents, that Arthur was satisfied.

"He denied any personal knowledge of Mrs. Conroy in this affair?" queried Arthur.

"Entirely! He gave me to understand that his instructions were received from another party unknown to me," said Dumphy. "Look yer, Poinsett — you 're wrong! I don't believe it is that woman."

Arthur shook his head. "No one else possesses the information necessary to blackmail you. No one else has a motive in doing it."

The door opened to a clerk bearing a card. Mr. Dumphy took it impatiently and read aloud, "Colonel Starbottle, of Siskiyou!" He then turned an anxious face to Poinsett.

"Good," said that gentleman quietly; "admit him." As the clerk disappeared, Arthur turned to Dumphy. "I suppose it was to meet this man you sent for me?"

"Yes," returned Dumphy, with a return of his old *brusqueness.*

"Then hold your tongue, and leave everything to me."

The door opened as he spoke to Colonel Starbottle's frilled shirt and expanding bosom, followed at a respectful interval by the gallant Colonel himself. He was evidently surprised by the appearance of Mr. Dumphy's guest, but by no means dashed in his usual chivalrous port and bearing. "My legal adviser, Mr. Poinsett," said Dumphy, introducing Arthur briefly.

The gallant Colonel bowed stiffly, while Arthur, with a smile of fascinating courtesy and deference that astonished Dumphy in proportion as it evidently flattered and gratified Colonel Starbottle, stepped forward and extended his hand. "As a younger member of the profession I can hardly claim the attention of one so experienced as Colonel Starbottle, but as the friend of poor Henry Beeswinger I can venture to take the hand of the man who so gallantly stood by him as his second, two years ago."

"Ged, sir," said Colonel Starbottle, absolutely empurpling with pleasure, and exploding his handkerchief from his sweltering breast. "Ged! you — er — er — do me proud! I am — er — gratified, sir, to meet any friend of — er — er — gentleman like Hank Beeswinger! I remember the whole affair, sir, as if it was yesterday. I do!" with an oath. "Gratifying, Mr. Poinsett, to every gentleman concerned. Your friend, sir, — I'm proud to meet you — I am, d—n me! killed, sir, second fire! Dropped like a gentleman, d—n me! — No fuss; no reporters; no arrests. Friends considerate. Blank me, sir, one of the finest, d—n me, I may say, sir, one of the very finest — er — meetings in which I have — er — participated. Glad to know you, sir. You call to mind, sir, one of the — er — highest illustrations of a code of honor — that —er — er — under the present — er — degrading state of public sentiment is — er — er — passing away. We are drifting, sir, drifting — drifting to er — er —*political and* social condition, where the Voice of Honor,

sir, is drowned by the Yankee watchword of Produce and Trade. Trade, sir, blank me!" Colonel Starbottle paused with a rhetorical full stop, blew his nose, and gazed at the ceiling with a plaintive suggestion that the days of chivalry had indeed passed, and that American institutions were indeed retrograding; Mr. Dumphy leaned back in his chair in helpless irritability; Mr. Arthur Poinsett alone retained an expression of courteous and sympathizing attention.

"I am the more gratified at meeting Colonel Starbottle," said Arthur gravely, "from the fact that my friend and client here, Mr. Dumphy, is at present in a condition where he most needs the consideration and understanding of a gentleman and a man of honor. A paper which has been intrusted to his safe-keeping and custody as a gentleman has disappeared since the earthquake, and it is believed that during the excitement of that moment it was lost! The paper is supposed to be intact, as it was in an envelope that *had never been opened, and whose seals were unbroken.* It is a delicate matter, but I am rejoiced that the gentleman who left the paper in trust is the honorable Colonel Starbottle, whom I know by reputation, and the gentleman who suffered the misfortune of losing it is my personal friend Mr. Dumphy. It enables me at once to proffer my services as mediator, or, as Mr. Dumphy's legal adviser and friend, to undertake *all* responsibility in the matter."

The tone and manner were so like Colonel Starbottle's own, that Dumphy looked from Arthur to Colonel Starbottle in hopeless amazement. The latter gentleman dropped his chin and fixed a pair of astonished and staring eyes upon Arthur. "Do I understand — that — er — this gentleman, Mr. Dumphy, has placed you in possession of any confidential statement — that — er" —

"Pardon me, Colonel Starbottle," interrupted Arthur, rising with dignity; "the facts I have just stated are sufficient for the responsibility I assume in this case. I learn

from my client that a sealed paper placed in his hands is missing. I have from him the statement that I am bound to believe, that it passed from his hands unopened; where, he knows not. This is a matter, between gentlemen, serious enough without further complication!"

"And the paper and envelope are lost?" continued Colonel Starbottle, still gazing at Arthur.

"Are lost," returned Arthur quietly. "I have advised my friend, Mr. Dumphy, that as a man of honor, and a business man, he is by no means freed through this unfortunate accident from any promise or contract that he may have entered into with you concerning it. Any deposit as a collateral for its safe delivery which he might have made, *or has promised to make*, is clearly forfeited. This he has been waiting only for your appearance to hand to you." Arthur crossed to Mr. Dumphy's side and laid his hand lightly upon his shoulder, but with a certain significance of grip palpable to Mr. Dumphy, who, after looking into his eyes, took out his check book. When he had filled in a duplicate of the check he had given Colonel Starbottle two days before, Arthur took it from his hand and touched the bell. "As we will not burden Colonel Starbottle unnecessarily, your cashier's acceptance of this paper will enable him to use it henceforth at his pleasure, and as I expect to have the pleasure of the Colonel's company to my office, will you kindly have this done at once?"

The clerk appeared, and, at Mr. Poinsett's direction, took the check from the almost passive fingers of Mr. Dumphy.

"Allow me to express my perfect satisfaction with — er — er your explanation!" said Colonel Starbottle, extending one hand to Arthur, while at the same moment he gracefully readjusted his shirt-bosom with the other. "Trouble yourself no further — regarding the — er — er — paper. I trust it will — er — yet be found; if not, sir, I shall — er — *er,*" *added* the Colonel, with honorable resignation,

"hold myself *personally responsible* to my client, blank me!"

"Was there no mark upon the envelope by which it might be known without explaining its contents?" suggested Arthur.

"None, sir, a plain yellow envelope. Stop!" said the Colonel, striking his forehead with his hand. "Ged, sir! I do remember now that during our conversation I made a memorandum, d—n me, a memorandum upon the face of it, across it, a name, Ged, sir, the very name of the party you were speaking of — Gabriel Conroy!"

"You wrote the name of Gabriel Conroy upon it! Good! That may lead to its identification without exposing its contents," returned Arthur. "Well, sir?"

The last two words were addressed to Mr. Dumphy's clerk, who had entered during the Colonel's speech and stood staring alternately at him and his employer, holding the accepted check in his hand.

"Give it to the gentleman," said Dumphy curtly.

The man obeyed. Colonel Starbottle took the check, folded it, and placed it somewhere in the moral recesses of his breast-pocket. That done, he turned to Mr. Dumphy. "I need not say — er — that — er — as far as my personal counsel and advice to my client can prevail, it will be my effort to prevent litigation in this — er — delicate affair. Should the envelope — er — er — turn up! you will of course — er — send it to me, who am — er — personally responsible for it. Ged, sir," continued the Colonel, "I should be proud to conclude this affair, conducted as it has been on your side with the strictest honor, over the — er — festive-board — but — er — business prevents me. I leave here in one hour for One Horse Gulch."

Both Mr. Dumphy and Poinsett involuntarily started.

"One Horse Gulch?" repeated Arthur.

"D—n me! yes! Ged, sir, I'm retained in a murder *case there; the* case of this man Gabriel Conroy."

Arthur cast a swift precautionary look at Dumphy. "Then perhaps we may be traveling companions," he said to Starbottle, smiling pleasantly. "I am going there too. Perhaps my good fortune may bring us in friendly counsel. You are engaged" —

"For the prosecution," interrupted Starbottle, slightly expanding his chest. "At the request of relatives of the murdered man — a Spanish gentleman of — er — er — large and influential family connections, I shall assist the district attorney, my old friend, Nelse Buckthorne!"

The excitement kindled in Arthur's eyes luckily did not appear in his voice. It was still pleasant to Colonel Starbottle's ear, as, after a single threatening glance of warning at the utterly mystified and half-exploding Dumphy, he turned gracefully toward him. "And if, by the fortunes of war, we should be again on opposite sides, my dear Colonel, I trust that our relations may be as gratifying as they have been to-day. One moment! I am going your way. Let me beg you to take my arm a few blocks, and a glass of wine afterwards as a stirrup-cup on our journey." And with a significant glance at Dumphy, Arthur Poinsett slipped Colonel Starbottle's arm deftly under his own, and actually marched off with that doughty warrior, a blushing, expanding, but not unwilling captive.

When the door closed Mr. Dumphy resumed his speech and action in a single expletive. What more he might have said is not known, for at the same moment he caught sight of his clerk, who had entered hastily at the exit of the others, but who now stood awed and abashed by Mr. Dumphy's passion. "Dash it all! what in dash are you dashingly doing here, dash you?"

"Sorry, sir," said the unlucky clerk; "but overhearing that gentleman say there was writing on the letter that you lost by which it might be identified, sir — we think we 've *found it — that is,* we know where it is!"

"How?" said Dumphy, starting up eagerly.

"When the shock came that afternoon," continued the clerk, "the express bag for Sacramento and Marysville had just been taken out by the expressman, and was lying on top of the wagon. The horses started to run at the second shock, and the bag fell and was jammed against a lamp-post in front of our window, bursting open as it did so and spilling some letters and papers on the sidewalk. One of our night watchmen helped the expressman pick up the scattered letters, and picked up among them a plain yellow envelope with no address but the name of Gabriel Conroy written in pencil across the end. Supposing it had dropped from some package in the express bag, he put it back again in the bag. When you asked about a blank envelope missing from your desk, he did not connect it with the one he had picked up, for *that* had writing on it. We sent to the express office just now, and found that they had stamped it, and forwarded it to Conroy at One Horse Gulch, just as they had always done with his letters sent to our care. That's the way of it. Daresay it's there by this time, in his hands, sir, all right!"

CHAPTER III

GABRIEL MEETS HIS LAWYER

GABRIEL'S petition on behalf of Mr. Hamlin was promptly granted by the sheriff. The wagon was at once put into requisition to convey the wounded man — albeit screaming and protesting — to the Grand Conroy Hotel, where, in company with his faithful henchman, he was left to all intents a free man, and a half an hour later a demented one, tossing in a burning fever.

Owing to the insecure condition of the county jail at One Horse Gulch, and possibly some belief in the equal untrustworthiness of the people, the sheriff conducted his prisoner, accompanied by Olly, to Wingdam. Nevertheless, Olly's statement of the changed condition of public sentiment, or rather its preoccupation with a calamity of more absorbing interest, was in the main correct. The news of the recapture of Gabriel by his legal guardian awoke no excitement nor comment. More than this, there was a favorable feeling toward the prisoner. The action of the vigilance committee had been unsuccessful, and had terminated disastrously to the principal movers therein. It is possible that the morality of their action was involved in their success. Somehow the whole affair had not resulted to the business interests of the Gulch. The three most prominent lynchers were dead — and clearly in error! The prisoner, who was still living, was possibly in the right. The "Silverpolis Messenger," which ten days before had alluded to the "noble spectacle of a free people outraged in their *holiest instincts*, appealing to the first principles of Justice

and Order, and rallying as a single man to their support," now quietly buried the victims and their motives from the public eye beneath the calm statement that they met their fate "while examining the roof of the court-house with a view to estimate the damage caused by the first shock of the earthquake." The "Banner" favored the same idea a little less elegantly, and suggested ironically that hereafter "none but experts should be allowed to go foolin' round the statue of Justice." I trust that the intelligent reader will not accuse me of endeavoring to cast ridicule upon the general accuracy of spontaneous public emotion, nor the infallibility of the true democratic impulse, which (I beg to quote from the "Messenger"), "in the earliest ages of our history enabled us to resist legalized aggression, and take the reins of government into our own hands," or (I now refer to the glowing language of the "Banner") "gave us the right to run the machine ourselves and boss the job." And I trust that the reader will observe in this passing recognition of certain inconsistencies in the expression and action of these people only the fidelity of a faithful chronicler, and no intent of churlish criticism nor moral or political admonition, which I here discreetly deprecate and disclaim.

Nor was there any opposition when Gabriel, upon the motion of Lawyer Maxwell, was admitted to bail pending the action of the grand jury, nor any surprise when Mr. Dumphy's agent and banker came forward as his bondsman for the sum of fifty thousand dollars. By one of those strange vicissitudes in the fortunes of mining speculation, this act by Mr. Dumphy was looked upon as an evidence of his trust in the future of the unfortunate mine of which Gabriel had been original locator and superintendent, and under that belief the stock rallied slightly. "It was a mighty sharp move of Pete Dumphy's bailin' thet Gabe, right in face of that there 'dropped lead' in his busted-up mine! Oh, you 've got to set up all night to get any points

to show *him!*" And, to their mutual surprise, Mr. Dumphy found himself more awe-inspiring than ever at One Horse Gulch, and Gabriel found himself a free man, with a slight popular flavor of martyrdom about him.

As he still persistently refused to enter again upon the premises which he had deeded to his wife on the day of the murder, temporary lodgings were found for him and Olly at the Grand Conroy Hotel. And here Mrs. Markle, although exhibiting to Lawyer Maxwell the greatest concern in Gabriel's trouble, by one of those inconsistencies of the sex which I shall not attempt to explain, treated the unfortunate accused with a degree of cold reserve that was as grateful, I fear, to Gabriel, as it was unexpected. Indeed, I imagine that if the kind-hearted widow had known the real comfort and assurance that the exasperating Gabriel extracted from her first cold and constrained greeting, she would have spent less of her time in consultation with Maxwell regarding his defense. But perhaps I am doing a large-hearted and unselfish sex a deep injustice. So I shall content myself with transcribing part of a dialogue which took place between them at the Grand Conroy.

Mrs. Markle (loftily, and regarding the ceiling with cold abstraction): "We can't gin ye here, Mister Conroy, the French style and attention ye're kinder habitooal to in your own house on the Hill, bein' plain folks and mounting ways. But we know our place, and don't reckon to promise the comforts of a home! Wot with lookin' arter forty reg'lar and twenty-five transient — ef I don't happen to see ye much myself, Mr. Conroy, ye'll understand. Ef ye ring thet there bell one o' the help will be always on hand. Yer lookin' well, Mr. Conroy. And bizness, I reckon" (the reader will here observe a ladylike ignoring of Gabriel's special trouble), "ez about what it allers waz, though judging from remarks of transients, it 's dull!"

Gabriel (endeavoring to conceal a large satisfaction under

the thin glossing of conventional sentiment): "Don't let me nor Olly put ye out a cent, Mrs. Markle — a change bein' ordered by Olly's physicians — and variety bein', so to speak, the spice o' life! And ye 're lookin' well, Mrs. Markle; that ez" (with a sudden alarm at the danger of compliment), "so to speak, ez peart and strong-handed ez ever! And how 's thet little Manty o' yours gettin' on? Jist how it was thet me and Olly did n't get to see ye before ez mighty queer! Times and times ag'in" (with shameless mendacity) "hez me and thet child bin on the p'int o' coming, and suthin' hez jest chipped in and interfered!"

Mrs. Markle (with freezing politeness): "You do me proud! I jest dropped in ez a matter o' not bein' able allers to trust to help. Good-night, Mister Conroy. I hope I see you well! Ye kin jest" (retiring with matronly dignity), — "ye kin jest touch onto that bell thar, if ye 're wantin' anything, and help 'll come to ye! Good-night!"

Olly (appearing a moment later at the door of Gabriel's room, truculent and suspicious): "Afore I 'd stand thar — chirpin' with thet crockidill — and you in troubil, and not knowin' wot 's gone o' July — I 'd pizen myself!"

Gabriel (blushing to the roots of his hair, and conscience-stricken to his inmost soul): "It 's jest passin' the time o' day, Olly, with old friends — kinder influencin' the public sentiment and the jury. Thet 's all. It 's the advice o' Lawyer Maxwell, ez ye did n't get to hear, I reckon, — thet 's all!"

But Gabriel's experience in the Grand Conroy Hotel was not, I fear, always as pleasant. A dark-faced, large-featured woman, manifestly in mourning, and as manifestly an avenging friend of the luckless deceased, in whose taking-off Gabriel was supposed to be so largely instrumental, presently appeared at the Grand Conroy Hotel, waiting the action of the grand jury. She was accompanied by a dark-faced elderly gentleman, our old friend Don Pedro — she being

none other than the unstable-waisted Manuela of Pacific Street — and was, I believe, in the opinion of One Horse Gulch, supposed to be charged with convincing and mysterious evidence against Gabriel Conroy. The sallow-faced pair had a way of meeting in the corridors of the hotel and conversing in mysterious whispers in a tongue foreign to One Horse Gulch and to Olly, strongly suggestive of revenge and concealed stilettos, that was darkly significant. Happily, however, for Gabriel, he was presently relieved from their gloomy espionage by the interposition of a third party — Sal Clark. That individual, herself in the deepest mourning, and representing the deceased in his holiest affections, it is scarcely necessary to say at once resented the presence of the strangers. The two women glared at each other at the public table, and in a chance meeting in the corridor of the hotel.

"In the name of God, what have we here in this imbecile and forward creature, and why is this so and after this fashion?" asked Manuela of Don Pedro.

"Of a verity, I know not," replied Don Pedro; "it is most possibly a person visited of God, — a helpless being of brains. Peradventure, a person filled with aguardiente or the whiskey of the Americans. Have a care, little one, thou smallest Manuela" (she weighed at least three hundred pounds), "that she does thee no harm!"

Meanwhile Miss Sarah Clark relieved herself to Mrs. Markle in quite as positive language. "Ef that black mulattar and that dried-up old furriner reckons they 're going to monopolize public sentiment in this yer way they 're mighty mistaken. Ef thar ever was a shameless piece et 's thet old woman — and, goodness knows, the man 's a poor critter enyway! Ef anybody 's goin' to take the word of that woman under oath, et 's mor' 'n Sal Clark would do — that 's all! Who ez she — enyway? I never *heard her name* mentioned afore!"

And ridiculous as it may seem to the unprejudiced reader, this positive expression and conviction of Miss Clark, like all positive convictions, was not without its influence on the larger unimpaneled grand jury of One Horse Gulch, and, by reflection, at last on the impaneled jury itself.

"When you come to consider, gentlemen," said one of those dangerous characters, — a sagacious, far-seeing juror, — "when you come to consider that the principal witness o' the prosecution and the people at the inquest don't know this yer Greaser woman, and kinder throws off her testimony, and the prosecution don't seem to agree, it looks mighty queer. And I put it to you as fa'r-minded men, if it ain't mighty queer? And this yer Sal Clark one of our own people."

An impression at once inimical to the new mistress and stranger, and favorable to the accused Gabriel, instantly took possession of One Horse Gulch.

Meanwhile the man who was largely responsible for this excitement and these conflicting opinions maintained a gravity and silence as indomitable and impassive as his alleged victim, then slumbering peacefully in the little cemetery on Round Hill. He conversed but little even with his counsel and friend, Lawyer Maxwell, and received with his usual submissiveness and gentle deprecatoriness the statement of that gentleman that Mr. Dumphy had already bespoken the services of one of the most prominent lawyers of San Francisco — Mr. Arthur Poinsett — to assist in the defense. When Maxwell added that Mr. Poinsett had expressed a wish to hold his first consultation with Gabriel privately, the latter replied with his usual simplicity, "I reckon I 've nowt to say to him ez I hain't said to ye, but it 's all right!"

"Then I 'll expect you over to my office at eleven to-morrow?" asked Maxwell.

"Thet 's so," responded Gabriel, "though I reckon thet

anything you and him might fix up to be dumped onto thet jury would be pleasin' and satisfactory to me."

At a few minutes of eleven the next morning Mr. Maxwell, in accordance with a previous understanding with Mr. Poinsett, put on his hat and left his office in the charge of that gentleman that he might receive and entertain Gabriel in complete privacy and confidence. As Arthur sat there alone, fine gentleman as he was and famous in his profession, he was conscious of a certain degree of nervousness that galled his pride greatly. He was about to meet the man whose cherished sister six years ago he had stolen! Such, at least, Arthur felt was Gabriel's opinion. *He* had no remorse nor consciousness of guilt or wrong-doing in that act. But in looking at the fact in his professional habit of viewing both sides of a question, he made this allowance for the sentiment of the prosecution, and putting himself, in his old fashion, in the position of his opponent, he judged that Gabriel might consistently exhibit some degree of indignation at their first meeting. That there was, however, really any *moral* question involved, he did not believe. The girl, Grace Conroy, had gone with him readily, after a careful and honorable statement of the facts of her situation, and Gabriel's authority or concern in any subsequent sentimental complication he utterly denied. That he, Arthur, had acted in a most honorable, high-minded, and even weakly generous fashion towards Grace; that he had obeyed her frivolous whims as well as her most reasonable demands; that he had gone back to Starvation Camp on a hopeless quest just to satisfy her; that everything had happened exactly as he had predicted, and that when he had returned to her he found that *she* had deserted *him* — these — these were the facts that were incontrovertible! Arthur was satisfied that he had been honorable and even generous; he was quite convinced that this very nervousness that he now experienced was solely the condition of a

mind too sympathetic even with the feelings of an opponent in affliction. "I must *not* give way to this absurd quixotic sense of honor," said this young gentleman to himself severely.

Nevertheless, at exactly eleven o' clock, when the staircase creaked with the strong steady tread of the giant Gabriel, Arthur felt a sudden start to his pulse. There was a hesitating rap at the door — a rap that was so absurdly inconsistent with the previous tread on the staircase — as inconsistent as were all the mental and physical acts of Gabriel — that Arthur was amused and reassured. "Come in," he said, with a return of his old confidence, and the door opened to Gabriel, diffident and embarrassed.

"I was told by Lawyer Maxwell," said Gabriel slowly, without raising his eyes, and only dimly cognizant of the slight, strong, elegant figure before him,— "I was told that Mr. Arthur Poinsett reckoned to see me to-day at eleven o'clock — so I came. Be you Mr. Poinsett?" (Gabriel here raised his eyes) — "be you, eh? — GOD A'MIGHTY! why, it 's — eh? — why — I want to know! — it can't be! — yes, it is!" He stopped. The recognition was complete!

Arthur did not move. If he had expected an outburst from the injured man before him he was disappointed. Gabriel passed his hard palm vaguely and confusedly across his forehead and through his hair, and lifted and put back behind his ears two tangled locks. And then, without heeding Arthur's proffered hand, yet without precipitation, anger, or indignation, he strode toward him, and asked calmly and quietly, as Arthur himself might have done, "Where is Grace?"

"I don't know," said Arthur bluntly. "I have not known for years. I have never known her whereabouts, living or dead, since the day I left her at a logger's house to return to Starvation Camp to bring help to you."

(Arthur could not resist italicizing the pronoun, nor despising himself for doing it when he saw that the full significance of his emphasis touched the man before him.) "She was gone when I returned; where, no one knew. I traced her to the presidio, but there she had disappeared."

Gabriel raised his eyes to Arthur's. The impression of nonchalant truthfulness which Arthur's speech always conveyed to his hearer, an impression that he did not prevaricate because he was not concerned sufficiently in his subject, was further sustained by his calm, clear eyes. But Gabriel did not speak, and Arthur went on: —

"She left the logger's camp voluntarily, of her own free will, and doubtless for some reason that seemed sufficient to her. She abandoned me — if I may so express myself — left my care, relieved me of the responsibility I held towards her relatives," he continued, with the first suggestion of personal apology in his tones, "without a word of previous intimation. Possibly she might have got tired of waiting for me. I was absent two weeks. It was the tenth day after my departure that she left the logger's hut."

Gabriel put his hand in his pocket and deliberately drew out the precious newspaper slip he had once shown to Olly. "Then thet thar 'Personal' wozen't writ by you, and thet P. A. don't stand fur Philip Ashley?" asked Gabriel, with a hopeless dejection in his tone.

Arthur glanced quickly over the paper, and smiled. "I never saw this before," he said. "What made you think *I* did it?" he asked curiously.

"Because July — my wife that was — said that P. A. meant you," said Gabriel simply.

"Oh! *she* said so, did she?" said Arthur, still smiling.

"She did. And ef it was n't you, who was it?"

"*I really don't* know," returned Arthur carelessly;

"possibly it might have been herself. From what I have heard of your wife, I think this might be one, and perhaps the most innocent, of her various impostures."

Gabriel cast down his eyes and for a moment was gravely silent. Then the look of stronger inquiry and intelligence that he had worn during the interview faded utterly from his face, and he began again in his old tone of apology. "For answerin' all my questions, I'm obliged to ye, Mr. Ashley, and it's right good in ye to remember ol' times, and ef I hev often thought hard on ye, ye 'll kinder pass thet by ez the nat'rel allowin's of a man ez was worried about a sister ez has n't been heerd from sens she left with ye. And ye must n't think this yer meetin' was o' my seekin'. I kinder dropped in yer," he added wearily, "to see a man o' the name o' Poinsett. He allowed to be yer at eleving o'clock — mebbe it 's airly yet — mebbe I 've kinder got wrong o' the place!" and he glanced apologetically around the room.

"*My* name is Poinsett," said Arthur, smiling; "the name of Philip Ashley, by which you knew me, was merely the one I assumed when I undertook the long overland trip." He said this in no tone of apology or even explanation, but left the impression on Gabriel's mind that a change of name, like a change of dress, was part of the outfit of a gentleman emigrant. And looking at the elegant young figure before him, it seemed exceedingly plausible. "It was as Arthur Poinsett, the San Francisco lawyer, that I made this appointment with you, and it is now as your old friend Philip Ashley that I invite your confidence, and ask you to tell me frankly the whole of this miserable business. I have come to help you, Gabriel, for your own — for your sister's sake. And I think I can do it!" He held out his hand again, and this time not in vain; with a sudden frank gesture it was taken in both of Gabriel's, and Arthur felt that the greatest difficulty he had anticipated in his advocacy of Gabriel's cause had been surmounted.

"He has told me the whole story, I think," said Arthur, two hours later, when Mawwell returned and found his associate thoughtfully sitting beside the window alone. "And I believe it. He is as innocent of this crime as you or I. Of that I have always been confident. How far he is accessory *after* the fact — I know he is not accessory *before* — is another question. But his story, that to me is perfectly convincing, I am afraid won't do before a jury and the world generally. It involves too much that is incredible, and damning to him secondarily if believed. We must try something else. As far as I can see, really, it seems that his own suggestion of a defense, as you told it to me, has more significance in it than the absurdity you only saw. We must admit the killing, and confine ourselves to showing excessive provocation. I know something of the public sentiment here, and the sympathies of the average jury, and if Gabriel should tell them the story he has just told me, they would hang him at once! Unfortunately for him, the facts show a complication of property interests and impostures on the part of his wife, of which he is perfectly innocent, and which are not really the motive of the murder, but which the jury would instantly accept as a sufficient motive. We must fight, understand, this very story from the outset; you will find it to be the theory of the prosecution; but if we can keep him silent it cannot be proved except by him. The facts are such that if he had really committed the murder he could have defied prosecution, but through his very stupidity and blind anxiety to shield his wife he has absolutely fixed the guilt upon himself."

"Then you don't think that Mrs. Conroy is the culprit?" asked Maxwell.

"No," said Arthur; "she is capable, but not culpable. The real murderer has never been suspected nor his presence known to One Horse Gulch. But I must see him *again, and Olly, and* you must hunt up a Chinaman — one

Ah Fe — who Gabriel tells me brought him the note, and who is singularly enough missing, now that he is wanted."

"But you can't use a Chinaman's evidence before a jury," interrupted Maxwell.

"Not directly; but I can find Christian Caucasians who would be willing to swear to the facts he supplied them with. I shall get at the facts in a few days, and then, my dear fellow," continued Arthur, laying his hand familiarly and patronizingly on the shoulder of his senior, — "and then you and I will go to work to see how we can get rid of them."

When Gabriel recounted the events of the day to Olly, and described his interview with Poinsett, she became furiously indignant. "And did that man mean to say he don't know whether Gracey is livin' or dead? And he pretendin' to hev bin her bo?"

"In coorse," explained Gabriel; "ye disremember, Olly, that Gracey never hez let on to *me*, her own brother, whar she ez, and she would n't be going to tell a stranger. Thar 's them personals as she never answered."

"Mebbe she did n't want to speak to him ag'in," said Olly fiercely, with a toss of her curls. "I 'd like to know what he 'd bin sayin' to her — like his impudence. Ennyhow he ought to hev found her out, and she his sweetheart! Why did n't he go right off to the presidio? What did he come back for? Not find her, indeed! Why, Gabe, do you suppose as July won't find *you* out soon — why, I bet anythin' she knows jest whar you are" (Gabriel trembled and felt an inward sinking), "and is on'y waitin' to come forward to the trial. And yer you are taken in ag'in and fooled by these yer lawyers! — you old Gabe, you. Let me git at thet Philip — Ashley Poinsett — thet 's all!"

CHAPTER IV

WHAT AH FE DOES NOT KNOW

THUS admonished by the practical-minded Olly, Gabriel retired precipitately to the secure fastnesses of Conroy's Hill, where, over a consolatory pipe in his deserted cabin, he gave himself up to reflections upon the uncertainty of the sex and the general vagaries of womanhood. At such times he would occasionally extend his wanderings to the gigantic pine-tree which still towered preëminently above its fellows in ominous loneliness, and seated upon one of its outlying roots, would gently philosophize to himself regarding his condition, the vicissitudes of fortune, the awful prescience of Olly, and the beneficence of a Creator who permitted such awkward triviality and uselessness as was incarnate in himself to exist at all! Sometimes, following the impulse of habit, he would encroach abstractedly upon the limits of his own domain, and find himself under the shadow of his own fine house on the hill, from which, since that eventful parting with his wife, he had always rigidly withheld his foot. As soon as he would make this alarming discovery, he would turn back in honorable delicacy and a slight sense of superstitious awe. Retreating from one of these involuntary incursions one day, in passing through an opening in a little thicket of buckeye near his house, he stumbled over a small work-basket lying in the withered grass, apparently mislaid or forgotten. Gabriel instantly recognized it as the property of his wife, and as quickly recalled the locality as one of her favorite resorts during the excessive *midday* heats. He hesitated, and then passed on,

and then stopped and returned again awkwardly and bashfully. To have touched any property of his wife's, after their separation, was something distasteful and impossible to Gabriel's sense of honor; to leave it there, the spoil of any passing Chinaman, or the prey of the elements, was equally inconsistent with a certain respect which Gabriel had for his wife's weaknesses. He compromised by picking it up with the intention of sending it to Lawyer Maxwell, as his wife's trustee. But in doing this, to Gabriel's great alarm (for he would as soon have sacrificed the hand that held this treasure as to have exposed its contents in curiosity or suspicion), part of the multitudinous contents overflowed and fell on the ground, and he was obliged to pick them up and replace them. One of them was a baby's shirt — so small it hardly filled the great hand that grasped it. In Gabriel's emigrant experience, as the frequent custodian and nurse of the incomplete human animal, he was somewhat familiar with those sacred, mummy-like enwrappings usually unknown to childless men, and he recognized it at once.

He did not replace it in the basket, but, with a suffused cheek and an increased sense of his usual awkwardness, stuffed it into the pocket of his blouse. Nor did he send the basket to Lawyer Maxwell, as he had intended, and in fact omitted any allusion to it in his usual account to Olly of his daily experience. For the next two days he was peculiarly silent and thoughtful, and was sharply reprimanded by Olly for general idiocy and an especial evasion of some practical duties.

"Yer 's them lawyers hez been huntin' ye to come over and examine that there Chinaman, Ah Fe, ez is jest turned up ag'in, and you ain't nowhar to be found; and Lawyer Maxwell sez it 's a most important witness. And whar 'bouts was ye found? Down in the Gulch, chirpin' and gossipin' with that Arkansas family, and totin' round Mrs. Welch's baby. And you a growed man, with a fammerly

of yer own to look after. I wonder ye ain't got more sabe! — prancin' round in this yer shiftless way, and you on trial, and accused o' killin' folks. Yer a high ole Gabe — rentin' yerself out fur a dry nuss for nothin'! "

Gabriel (coloring and hastily endeavoring to awaken Olly's feminine sympathies): "It waz the powerfullest, smallest baby — ye oughter get to see it, Olly! 'T ain't bigger nor a squirrel — on'y two weeks old yesterday! "

Olly (outwardly scornful, but inwardly resolving to visit the phenomenon next week): "Don't stand yawpin' here, but waltz down to Lawyer Maxwell and see that Chinaman."

Gabriel reached the office of Lawyer Maxwell just as that gentleman and Arthur Poinsett were rising from a long, hopeless, and unsatisfactory examination of Ah Fe. The lawyers had hoped to be able to establish the fact of Gabriel's remoteness from the scene of the murder by some corroborating incident or individual that Ah Fe could furnish in support of the detailed narrative he had already given. But it did not appear that any Caucasian had been encountered or met by Ah Fe at the time of his errand. And Ah Fe's memory of the details he had already described was apparently beginning to be defective; it was evident nothing was to be gained from him even if he had been constituted a legal witness. And then, more than all, he was becoming sullen!

"We are afraid that we have n't made much out of your friend Ah Fe," said Arthur, taking Gabriel's hand. "You might try if *you* can revive his memory, but it looks doubtful."

Gabriel gazed at Ah Fe intently, possibly because he was the last person who had spoken to his missing wife. Ah Fe returned the gaze, discharging all expression from his countenance, except a slight suggestion of the habitual *vague astonishment* always seen in the face of a newborn

infant. Perhaps this peculiar expression, reminding Gabriel as it did of the phenomenon in the Welch family, interested him. But the few vague wandering questions he put were met by equally vague answers. Arthur rose in some impatience; Lawyer Maxwell wiped away the smile that had been lingering around his mouth. The interview was ended.

Arthur and Maxwell passed down the narrow stairway arm in arm. Gabriel would have followed them with Ah Fe, but turning toward that Mongolian, he was alarmed by a swift spasm of expression that suddenly convulsed Ah Fe's face. He winked both his eyes with the velocity of sheet-lightning, nodded his head with frightful rapidity, and snapped and apparently dislocated every finger on his right hand. Gabriel gazed at him in open-mouthed wonder.

"All litee!" said Ah Fe, looking intently at Gabriel.

"Which?" asked Gabriel.

"All litee! You shabbee 'all litee!' *She* say 'all litee.'"

"Who 's *she?*" asked Gabriel, in sudden alarm.

"You lifee! — shabbee? — Missee Conloy! She likee you — shabbee? Me likee you! — shabbee? Miss Conloy she say 'all litee!' You shabbee shelliff?"

"Which?" said Gabriel.

"Shelliff! Man plenty chokee bad man!"

"Sheriff, I reckon," suggested Gabriel, with great gravity.

"Um! shelliff. Mebbe you shabbee him bimeby. He chokee bad man. Much chokee. Chokee like hellee! *He no chokee you.* No. Shabbee? She say 'shelliff no chokee you.' Shabbee?"

"I see," said Gabriel significantly.

"She say," continued Ah Fe, with gasping swiftness, "she say you talkee too much. She say me talkee too much. She say Maxwellee talkee too much. All talkee

too much. She say 'no talkee!' Shabbee? She say 'ash up!' Shabbee? She say 'dly up!' Shabbee? She say 'bimeby plenty talkee — bimeby all litee!' Shabbee?"

"But whar ez she — whar kin I git to see her?" asked Gabriel.

Ah Fe's face instantly discharged itself of all expression. A wet sponge could not have more completely obliterated all penciled outline of character or thought from his blank slate-colored physiognomy than did Gabriel's simple question. He returned his questioner's glance with ineffable calmness and vacancy, patiently drew the long sleeves of his blouse still further over his varnished fingers, crossed them submissively and Orientally before him, and waited apparently for Gabriel to become again intelligible.

"Look yer," said Gabriel, with gentle persuasiveness, "ef it's the same to ye, you'd be doin' me a heap o' good ef you'd let on whar thet July — thet Mrs. Conroy ez. Bein' a man ez in his blindness bows down to wood and stun, ye ain't supposed to allow fur a Christian's feelings. But I put to ye ez a fa'r-minded brethren — a true man and a man whatsoever his color — that it's a square thing fur ye to allow to me whar thet woman ez ez my relation by marriage ez hidin'! Allowin' it's one o' my idols — I axes you as a brother pagan — whar ez she?"

A faint, flickering smile of pathetic abstraction and simplicity, as of one listening to far-off but incomprehensible music, stole over Ah Fe's face. Then he said kindly, gently, but somewhat vaguely and unsatisfactorily, —

"Me no shabbee Melican man. Me washee shirtee! dollah and hap dozen!"

CHAPTER V

THE PEOPLE V. JOHN DOE ALIAS GABRIEL CONROY, AND JANE ROE ALIAS JULIE CONROY. BEFORE BOOMPOINTER, J.

THE day of the trial was one of exacting and absorbing interest to One Horse Gulch. Long before ten o'clock the court-room, and even the halls and corridors of the lately rehabilitated court-house, were thronged with spectators. It is only fair to say that by this time the main points at issue were forgotten. It was only remembered that some of the first notabilities of the State had come up from Sacramento to attend the trial; that one of the most eminent lawyers in San Francisco had been engaged for the prisoner at a fee variously estimated from fifty to one hundred thousand dollars, and that the celebrated Colonel Starbottle of Siskiyou was to assist in the prosecution; that a brisk duel of words, and it was confidently hoped, a later one of pistols, would grow out of this forensic encounter; that certain disclosures affecting men and women of high social standing were to be expected; and, finally, that in some mysterious way a great political and sectional principle (Colonel Starbottle was from the South and Mr. Poinsett from the North) was to be evolved and upheld during the trial — these were the absorbing fascinations to One Horse Gulch.

At ten o'clock Gabriel, accompanied by his counsel, entered the court-room, followed by Colonel Starbottle. Judge Boompointer, entering at the same moment, bowed distantly to Arthur, and familiarly to Colonel Starbottle.

In his otium off the bench, he had been chaffed by the district attorney, and had lost large sums at play with Colonel Starbottle. Nevertheless he was a trifle uneasy under the calmly critical eyes of the famous young advocate from San Francisco. Arthur was too wise to exhibit his fastidiousness before the court; nevertheless, Judge Boompointer was dimly conscious that he would on that occasion have preferred that the clerk who sat below him had put on a cleaner shirt, and himself refrained from taking off his cravat and collar, as was his judicial habit on the Wingdom circuit. There was some slight prejudice on the part of the panel to this well-dressed young lawyer, which they were pleased to specify and define more particularly as his general "airiness." Seeing which, Justice, on the bench, became more dignified, and gazed severely at the panel and at Arthur.

In the selection of the jury there was some difficulty; it was confidently supposed that the prisoner's counsel would challenge the array on the ground of the recent vigilance excitement, but public opinion was disappointed when the examination of the defense was confined to trivial and apparently purposeless inquiry into the nativity of the several jurors. A majority of those accepted by the defense were men of Southern birth and education. Colonel Starbottle, who, as a representative of the peculiar chivalry of the South, had always adopted this plan himself, in cases where his client was accused of assault and battery, or even homicide, could not in respect to his favorite traditions object to it. But when it was found that there were only two men of Northern extraction on the jury, and that not a few of them had been his own clients, Colonel Starbottle thought he had penetrated the theory of the defense.

I regret that Colonel Starbottle's effort, admirably characterized by the "Banner" as "one of the most scathing and

Junius-like gems of legal rhetoric ever known to the Californian bar," has not been handed down to me in extenso. Substantially, however, it appeared that Colonel Starbottle had never before found himself in "so peculiar, so momentous, so — er — delicate a position. A position, sir — er — er — gentlemen, fraught with the deepest social, professional — er — er — he should not hesitate to say, upon his own personal responsibility, a position of the deepest political significance! Colonel Starbottle was aware that this statement might be deprecated — nay, even *assailed* by some. But he did not retract that statement. Certainly not in the presence of that jury, in whose intelligent faces he saw — er — er — er — justice — inflexible justice! — er — er — mingled and — er — mixed with — with chivalrous instinct, and suffused with the characteristic — er — er — glow of — er — er" — (I regret to add that at this supreme moment, as the Colonel was lightly waving away with his fat right hand the difficulties of rhetoric, a sepulchral voice audible behind the jury suggested "Robinson County whiskey" as the origin of the phenomena the Colonel hesitated to describe. The judge smiled blandly and directed the deputy sheriff to preserve order. The deputy obeyed the mandate by looking over into the crowd behind the jury, and saying, in an audible tone, "You 'd better dry up thar, Joe White, or git out o' that!" and the Colonel, undismayed, proceeded.) "He well understood the confidence placed by the defense in these gentlemen. He had reason to believe that an attempt would be made to show that this homicide was committed in accordance with certain — er — er — principles held by honorable men — that the act was retributive, and in defense of an invasion of domestic rights and the sanctity of wedlock. But he should show them its fallacy. He should show them that only a base pecuniary motive influenced the prisoner. He should show them — er — er — that the

accused had placed himself, firstly, by his antecedent acts, and, secondly, by the manner of the later act, beyond the sympathies of honorable men. He should show them a previous knowledge of certain — er — er — indiscretions on the part of the prisoner's wife, and a condonation by the prisoner of those indiscretions, that effectually debarred the prisoner from the provisions of the code; he should show an inartistic, he must say, even on his own personal responsibility, a certain ungentlemanliness, in the manner of the crime that refused to clothe it with the — er — er — generous mantle of chivalry. The crime of which the prisoner was accused might have — er — er — been committed by a Chinaman or a nigger. Colonel Starbottle did not wish to be misunderstood. It was not in the presence of — er — Beauty" — (the Colonel paused, drew out his handkerchief, and gracefully waved it in the direction of the dusky Manuela and the truculent Sal — both ladies acknowledging the courtesy as an especial and isolated tribute, and exchanging glances of the bitterest hatred) — "it is not, gentlemen, in the presence of an all-sufficient and enthralling sex that I would seek to disparage their influence with man. But I shall prove that this absorbing — er — er — passion, this — er — er — delicious — er — er — fatal weakness, that rules the warlike camp, the — er — er — stately palace, as well as the — er — er — cabin of the base-born churl, never touched the calculating soul of Gabriel Conroy! Look at him, gentlemen! Look at him, and say upon your oaths, upon your experience as men of gallantry, if he is a man to sacrifice himself for a woman. Look at him, and say truly, as men personally responsible for their opinions, if he is a man to place himself in a position of peril through the blandishments of — er — er — Beauty, or sacrifice himself upon the — er — er — altar of Venus!"

Every eye was turned upon Gabriel. And certainly at

that moment he did not bear any striking resemblance to a sighing Amintor or a passionate Othello. His puzzled, serious face, which had worn a look of apologetic sadness, was suffused at this direct reference of the prosecution; and the long, heavy lower limbs, which he had diffidently tucked away under his chair to reduce the elevation of his massive knees above the ordinary level of one of the court-room chairs, retired still further. Finding himself, during the Colonel's rhetorical pause, still the centre of local observation, he slowly drew from his pocket a small comb, and began awkwardly to comb his hair, with an ineffective simulation of preoccupation and indifference.

"Yes, sir, "continued the Colonel, with that lofty forensic severity so captivating to the spectator, "you may comb yer hair" (hyar was the Colonel's pronunciation), "but yer can't comb it so as to make this intelligent jury believe that it is fresh from the hands of — er — er — Delilah."

The Colonel then proceeded to draw an exceedingly poetical picture of the murdered Ramirez — "a native, appealing to the sympathies of every Southern man, a native of the tropics, impulsive, warm, and peculiarly susceptible, as we all are, gentlemen, to the weaknesses of the heart." The Colonel "would not dwell further upon this characteristic of the deceased. There were within the sound of his voice, visible to the sympathizing eyes of the jury, two beings who had divided his heart's holiest affections — their presence was more eloquent than words. This man," continued the Colonel, "a representative of one of our oldest Spanish families — a family that recalled the days of — er — er — the Cid and Don John — this man had been the victim at once of the arts of Mrs. Conroy and the dastardly fears of Gabriel Conroy; of the wiles of the woman and the stealthy steel of the man."

"Colonel Starbottle would show that, personating the character and taking the name of Grace Conroy, an absent

sister of the accused, Mrs. Conroy, then really Madame Devarges, sought the professional aid of the impulsive and generous Ramirez to establish her right to a claim then held by the accused — in fact, wrongfully withheld from his own sister, Grace Conroy. That Ramirez, believing implicitly in the story of Madame Devarges with the sympathy of an overflowing nature, gave her that aid until her marriage with Gabriel exposed the deceit. Colonel Starbottle would not characterize the motives of such a marriage. It was apparent to the jury. They were intelligent men, and would detect the unhallowed combination of two confederates, under the sacrament of a holy institution, to deceive the trustful Ramirez. It was a nuptial feast at which — er — er — Mercury presided, and not — er — er — Hymen. Its only issue was fraud and murder. Having obtained possession of the property in a common interest, it was necessary to remove the only witness of the fraud, Ramirez. The wife found a willing instrument in the husband. And how was the deed committed? Openly and in the presence of witnesses? Did Gabriel even assume a virtue, and under the pretext of an injured husband challenge the victim to the field of honor? No! no, gentlemen. Look at the murderer, and contrast his enormous bulk with the — er — slight, graceful, youthful figure of the victim, and you will have an idea of the — er — er — enormity of the crime."

After this exordium came the *testimony*, i. e., facts colored more or less unconsciously, according to the honest prejudices of the observer, his capacity to comprehend the fact he had observed, and his disposition to give his theory regarding that fact rather than the fact itself. And when the blind had testified to what they saw, and the halt had stated where they walked and ran, the prosecution rested with a flush of triumph.

They had established severally, that the deceased had

died from the effects of a knife-wound; that Gabriel had previously quarreled with him and was seen on the hill within a few hours of the murder; that he had absconded immediately after, and that his wife was still a fugitive, and that there was ample motive for the deed in the circumstances surrounding the prisoner.

Much of this was shaken on cross-examination. The surgeon who made the autopsy was unable to say whether the deceased, being consumptive, might not have died from consumption that very night. The witness who saw Gabriel pushing the deceased along the road could not swear positively whether the deceased were not pulling Gabriel instead, and the evidence of Mrs. Conroy's imposture was hearsay only. Nevertheless bets were offered in favor of Starbottle against Poinsett — that being the form in which the interest of One Horse Gulch crystallized itself.

When the prosecution rested, Mr. Poinsett, as counsel for defense, moved for the discharge of the prisoner, no evidence having been shown of his having had any relations with or knowledge of the deceased until the day of the murder, and none whatever of his complicity with the murderess, against whom the evidence of the prosecution and the arguments of the learned prosecuting attorney were chiefly directed.

Motion overruled. A sigh of relief went up from the spectators and the jury. That any absurd technical objection should estop them from that fun which as law-abiding citizens they had a right to expect, seemed oppressive and scandalous; and when Arthur rose to open for the defense, it was with an instinctive consciousness that his audience were eying him as a man who had endeavored to withdraw from a race.

Ridiculous as it seemed in reason, it was enough to excite Arthur's flagging interest and stimulate his combat-

iveness. With ready tact he fathomed the expectation of the audience, and at once squarely joined issue with the Colonel.

Mr. Poinsett differed from his learned friend in believing this case was at all momentous or peculiar. It was a quite common one — he was sorry to say a *very* common one — in the somewhat hasty administration of the law in California. He was willing to admit a peculiarity in his eloquent brother's occupying the line of attack, when his place was as clearly at his, Mr. Poinsett's side. He should overlook some irregularities in the prosecution from this fact, and from the natural confusion of a man possessing Colonel Starbottle's quick sympathies, who found himself arrayed against his principles. He should, however, relieve them from that confusion, by stating that there really was no principle involved beyond the common one of self-preservation. He was willing to admit the counsel's ingenious theory that Mrs. Conroy — who was not mentioned in the indictment, or indeed any other person not specified — had committed the deed for which his client was charged. But as they were here to try Gabriel Conroy only, he could not see the relevancy of the testimony to that fact. He should content himself with the weakness of the accusation. He should not occupy their time, but should call at once to the stand the prisoner; the man who, the jury would remember, was now, against all legal precedent, actually, if not legally, placed again in peril of his life, in the very building which but a few days before had seen his danger and his escape.

He should call Gabriel Conroy!

There was a momentary sensation in the court. Gabriel uplifted his huge frame slowly, and walked quietly toward the witness-box. His face slightly flushed under the half-critical, half-amused gaze of the spectators, and those by *whom he brushed* as he made his way through the crowd

noticed that his breathing was hurried. But when he reached the box his face grew more composed, and his troubled eyes presently concentrated their light fixedly upon Colonel Starbottle. Then the clerk mumbled the oath, and he took his seat

"What is your name?" asked Arthur.

"I reckon ye mean my real name?" queried Gabriel, with a touch of his usual apology.

"Yes, certainly, your real name, sir," replied Arthur, a little impatiently.

Colonel Starbottle pricked up his ears, and lifting his eyes, met Gabriel's dull, concentrated fires full in his own.

Gabriel then raised his eyes indifferently to the ceiling. "My real name — my genooine name — is Johnny Dumbledee, J-o-n-n-y, Johnny, D-u-m-b-i-l-d-e, Johnny Dumbledee!"

There was a sudden thrill, and then a stony silence. Arthur and Maxwell rose to their feet at the same moment. "What?" said both those gentlemen sharply, in one breath.

"Johnny Dumbledee," repeated Gabriel, slowly and with infinite deliberation, — "Johnny Dumbledee ez my real name. I hev frequent," he added, turning around in easy confidence to the astonished Judge Boompointer, — "I hev frequent allowed I was Gabriel Conroy — the same not being the truth. And the woman ez I married — *her* name was Grace Conroy, and the heap o' lies ez thet old liar over thar" (he indicated the gallant Colonel Starbottle with his finger) "hez told passes my pile! Thet woman — my wife ez was and ez — waz Grace Conroy." (To the Colonel, gravely): "You hear me! And the only imposture, please your Honor and this yer court, and you gentl'men, was ME!"

CHAPTER VI

IN REBUTTAL

THE utter and complete astonishment created by Gabriel's reply was so generally diffused that the equal participation of Gabriel's own counsel in this surprise was unobserved. Maxwell would have risen again hurriedly, but Arthur laid his hand on his shoulder.

"The man has gone clean mad! — this is suicide," whispered Maxwell excitedly. "We must get him off the stand. You must explain!"

"Hush!" said Arthur quietly. "Not a word! Show any surprise and we're lost!"

In another instant all eyes were fixed upon Arthur, who had remained standing, outwardly calm. There was but one idea dominant in the audience. What revelation would the next question bring? The silence became almost painful as Arthur quietly and self-containedly glanced around the court-room and at the jury, as if coolly measuring the effect of a carefully planned dramatic sensation. Then, when every neck was bent forward and every ear alert, Arthur turned nonchalantly yet gracefully to the bench.

"We have no further questions to ask, your Honor," he said quietly, and sat down.

The effect of this simple, natural, and perfectly consistent action was tremendous! In the various triumphs of Arthur's successful career, he felt that he had never achieved as universal and instantaneous popularity. Gabriel was forgotten; *the* man who had worked up this sensation — a sensation *whose darkly mysterious* bearing upon the case no one could

fathom, or even cared to fathom, but a sensation that each man confidently believed held the whole secret of the crime — this man was the hero! Had it been suggested, the jury would have instantly given a verdict for this hero's client without leaving their seats. The betting was two to one on Arthur. I beg to observe that I am writing of men, impulsive, natural, and unfettered in expression and action by any tradition of logic or artificial law — a class of beings much idealized by poets, and occasionally, I believe, exalted by latter-day philosophers.

Judge Boompointer looked at Colonel Starbottle. That gentleman, completely stunned and mystified by the conduct of the defense, fumbled his papers, coughed, expanded his chest, rose, and began the cross-examination.

"You have said your name was — er — er — Johnny — er — er" — (the Colonel was here obliged to consult his papers) — "er — John Dumbledee. What was your idea, Mr. Dumbledee, in — er — assuming the name of — er — er — Gabriel Conroy?"

Objected to by counsel for defense. Argument: Firstly, motives, like beliefs, not admissible; case cited, Higginbottom *v.* Smithers. Secondly, not called out on Direct Ex.; see Swinke *v.* Swanke, opinion of Muggins, J., 2 Cal. Rep. Thirdly, witness not obliged to answer questions tending to self-crimination. Objection overruled by the court. Precedent not cited; real motive, Curiosity. Boompointer, J. Question repeated: —

"What was your idea or motive in assuming the name of Gabriel Conroy?"

Gabriel (cunningly, and leaning confidentially over the arm of his chair): "Wot would be *your* idee of a motif?"

The witness, amidst much laughter, was here severely instructed by the court that the asking of questions was not the function of a witness. The witness must answer.

Gabriel: "Well, Gabriel Conroy was a purty name —

the name of a man ez I onst knew ez died in Starvation Camp. It kinder came easy, ez a sort o' interduckshun, don't ye see, jedge, toe his sister Grace, ez was my wife. I kinder reckon, between you and me, ez thet name sorter helped the courtin' along — she bein' a shy crittur, outer her own fammerly."

Question: "In your early acquaintance with the deceased, were you not known to him as Gabriel Conroy always, and not as — er — er — Johnny Dumbledee?"

Arthur Poinsett here begged to call the attention of the court to the fact that it had not yet been shown that Gabriel — that is, Johnny Dumbledee — had ever had any *early* acquaintance with the deceased. The court would not fail to observe that counsel on the direct examination had restricted themselves to a simple question, — the name of the prisoner.

Objection sustained by Judge Boompointer, who was beginning to be anxious to get at the facts. Whereat Colonel Starbottle excepted, had no more questions to ask, and Gabriel was commanded to stand aside.

Betting now five to one on Arthur Poinsett; Gabriel's hand, on leaving the witness-box, shaken cordially by a number of hitherto disinterested people. Hurried consultation between defendant's counsel. A note handed to Colonel Starbottle. Intense curiosity manifested by Manuela and Sal regarding a closely veiled female, who enters a moment later, and is conducted with an excess of courtesy to a seat by the gallant Colonel. General impatience of audience and jury.

The defense resumed. Michael O'Flaherty called; nativity, County Kerry, Ireland. Business, miner. On the night of the murder, while going home from work, met deceased on Conroy's Hill, dodging in among the trees, for *all the* wurreld like a thafe. A few minutes later overtook [redacted]*riel Conroy* half a mile farther on, on the same road,

going in same direction as witness, and walked with him to Lawyer Maxwell's office. Cross-examined: Is naturalized. Always voted the Dimmycratic ticket. Was always opposed to the government — bad cess to it — in the ould counthry, and is n't thet mane to go back on his principles here. Does n't know that a Chinaman has affirmed to the same fact of Gabriel's alibi. Does n't know what an alibi is; thinks he would if he saw it. Believes a Chinaman is worse nor a nigger. Has noticed that Gabriel was left-handed.

Amadée Michet, sworn for defense; nativity, France. Business, foreman of "La Parfaite Union." Frequently walks to himself in the beautiful grove on Conroy's Hill. Comes to him, on the night of the 15th, Gabriel Conroy departing from his house. It is then seven hours, possibly more, not less. The night is fine. This Gabriel salutes him in the American fashion, and is gone. Eastward. Ever to the east. Watches M. Conroy because he wears a triste look, as if there were great sadness *here* (in the breast of the witness's blouse). Sees him vanish in the gulch. Returns to the hill and there overhears voices, a man's and a woman's. The woman's voice is that of Madame Conroy. The man's voice is to him strange and not familiar. Will swear positively it was not Gabriel's. Remains on the hill about an hour. Did not see Gabriel again. Saw a man and woman leave the hill and pass by the Wingdam road as he was going home. To the best of his belief the woman was Mrs. Conroy. Do not know the man. Is positive it was not Gabriel Conroy. Why? Eh? Mon Dieu, is it possible that one should mistake a giant?

Cross-examined. Is a patriot — do not know what is this Democrat you call. Is a hater of aristocrats. Do not know if the deceased was an aristocrat. Was not enraged with Madame Conroy. Never made love to her. Was not jilted by her. This is all what you call too theen, eh? Has noticed that the prisoner was left-handed.

Helling Dittmann; nativity, Germany. Does not know the deceased; does know Gabriel. Met him the night of the 15th on the road from Wingdam; thinks it was after eight o'clock. He was talking to a Chinaman.

Cross-examined. Has not been told that these are the facts stated by the Chinaman. Believes a Chinaman as good as any other man. Don't know what you mean. How comes dese dings? Has noticed the prisoner used his left hand efery dime.

Dr. Pressnitz recalled. Viewed the body at nine o'clock on the 16th. The blood-stains on the linen and the body had been slightly obliterated and diluted with water, as if they had been subjected to a watery application. There was an unusually heavy dew at seven o'clock that evening, not later. Has kept a meteorological record for the last three years. Is of the opinion that this saturation might be caused by dew falling on a clot of coagulated blood. The same effect would not be noticeable on a freshly bleeding wound. The hygrometer showed no indication of a later fall of dew. The night was windy and boisterous after eight o'clock, with no humidity. Is of the opinion that the body, as seen by him, first assumed its position before eight o'clock. Would not swear positively that the deceased expired before that time. Would swear positively that the wounds were not received after eight o'clock. From the position of the wound, should say it was received while the deceased was in an upright position, and the arm raised as if in struggling. From the course of the wound should say it could not have been dealt from the left hand of an opponent. On the cross-examination, Dr. Pressnitz admitted that many so-called "left-handed men" were really ambidexterous. Was of the opinion that perspiration would *not* have caused the saturation of the dead man's linen. The saturation was evidently after death — the blood had clotted. *Dr. Pressnitz* was quite certain that a dead man did not *perspire.*

The defense rested amid a profound sensation. Colonel Starbottle, who had recovered his jaunty spirits, apparently influenced by his animated and gallant conversation with the veiled female, rose upon his short stubby feet, and withdrawing his handkerchief from his breast, laid it upon the table before him. Then carefully placing the ends of two white pudgy fingers upon it, Colonel Starbottle gracefully threw his whole weight upon their tips, and leaning elegantly toward the veiled figure, called, "Grace Conroy."

The figure arose, slight, graceful, elegant; hesitated a moment, and then slipped, a lissom shadow, through the crowd as a trout glides through a shallow, and before the swaying, moving mass had settled to astonished rest, stood upon the witness-stand. Then with a quick dexterous movement she put aside the veil, that after the Spanish fashion was both bonnet and veil, and revealed a face so exquisitely beautiful and gracious, that even Manuela and Sal were awed into speechless admiration. She took the oath with downcast lids, whose sweeping fringes were so perfect that this very act of modesty seemed to the two female critics as the most artistic coquetry, and then raised her dark eyes and fixed them upon Gabriel.

Colonel Starbottle waved his hand with infinite gallantry.

"What is — er — your name?"

"Grace Conroy."

"Have you a brother by the name of Gabriel Conroy?"

"I have."

"Look around the court and see if you can recognize him."

The witness, with her eyes still fixed on Gabriel, pointed him out with her gloved finger. "I do. He is there!"

"The prisoner at the bar?"

"Yes."

"He is Gabriel Conroy?"

"He is."

"How long is it since you have seen him?"

"Six years."

"Where did you see him last, and under what circumstances?"

"At Starvation Camp, in the Sierras. I left there to get help for him and my sister."

"And you have never seen him since?"

"Never!"

"Are you aware that among the — er — er — unfortunates who perished, a body that was alleged to be yours was identified?"

"Yes."

"Can you explain that circumstance?"

"Yes. When I left I wore a suit of boy's clothes. I left my own garments for Mrs. Peter Dumphy, one of our party. It was her body, clothed in my garments, that was identified as myself."

"Have you any proof of that fact other than your statement?"

"Yes. Mr. Peter Dumphy, the husband of Mrs. Dumphy, my brother Gabriel Conroy, and" —

"May it please the court" (the voice was Arthur Poinsett's, cool, quiet, and languidly patient), — "may it please the court, we of the defense — to save your Honor and the jury some time and trouble — are willing to admit this identification of our client as Gabriel Conroy, and the witness, without further corroboration than her own word, as his sister. Your Honor and the gentlemen of the jury will not fail to recognize in the evidence of our client as to his own name and origin a rash, foolish, and, on behalf of myself and my colleague, I must add, unadvised attempt to save the reputation of the wife he deeply loves from the equally unadvised and extraneous evidence brought forward *by the prosecution*. But we must insist, your Honor, that *all this is* impertinent to the real issue, the killing of

Victor Ramirez by John Doe, alias Gabriel Conroy. Admitting the facts just testified to by the witness, Grace Conroy, we have no cross-examination to make."

The face of the witness, which had been pale and self-possessed, flushed suddenly as she turned her eyes upon Arthur Poinsett. But that self-contained scamp retained an unmoved countenance as, at Judge Boompointer's unusually gracious instruction that the witness might retire, Grace Conroy left the stand. To a question from the court, Colonel Starbottle intimated that he should offer no further evidence in rebuttal.

"May it please the court," said Arthur quietly, "if we accept the impeachment by a sister of a brother on trial for his life, without comment or cross-examination, it is because we are confident — legally confident — of showing the innocence of that brother by other means. Recognizing the fact that this trial is not for the identification of the prisoner under any name or alias, but simply upon the issue of the fact whether he did or did not commit murder upon the body of Victor Ramirez, as specified in the indictment, we now, waiving all other issues, prepare to prove his innocence by a single witness. That this witness was not produced earlier, was unavoidable; that his testimony was not outlined in the opening, was due to the fact that only within the last half-hour had he been within the reach of the mandate of this court. He would call Henry Perkins!"

There was a slight stir among the spectators by the door as they made way to a quaint figure that, clad in garments of a bygone fashion, with a pale, wrinkled, yellow face, and gray hair, from which the dye had faded, stepped upon the stand.

Is a translator of Spanish and searcher of deeds to the land commission. Is called an expert. Recognizes the prisoner at the bar. Saw him only once, two days before the murder, in passing over Conroy's Hill. He was sitting

on the doorstep of a deserted cabin with a little girl by his side. Saw the deceased twice. Once when he came to Don Pedro's house in San Francisco to arrange for the forgery of a grant that should invalidate one already held by the prisoner's wife. Saw the deceased again, after the forgery, on Conroy's Hill, engaged in conversation with the prisoner's wife. Deceased appeared to be greatly excited, and suddenly drew a knife and made an attack upon the prisoner's wife. Witness reached forward, and interposed in defense of the woman, when the deceased turned upon him in a paroxysm of insane rage, and a struggle took place between them for the possession of the knife, witness calling for help. Witness did not succeed in wresting the knife from the hands of deceased; it required all his strength to keep himself from bodily harm. In the midst of the struggle witness heard steps approaching, and again called for help.

The witness's call was responded to by a voice in broken English, unintelligible to witness, apparently the voice of a Chinaman. At the sound of the voice and the approach of footsteps, the deceased broke from witness, and running backward a few steps, plunged the knife into his own breast and fell. Witness ran to his side and again called for help. Deceased turned upon him with a ghastly smile and said, "Bring any one here and I'll accuse you before them of my murder!" Deceased did not speak again, but fell into a state of insensibility. Witness became alarmed, reflecting upon the threat of the deceased, and did not go for help. While standing irresolutely by the body, Mrs. Conroy, the prisoner's wife, came upon him. Confessed to her the details just described, and the threat of the deceased. She advised the instant flight of the witness, and offered to go with him herself. Witness procured a horse and buggy *from* a livery stable, and at halfpast nine at night took *Mrs. Conroy from* the hillside near the road, where she was

waiting. Drove to Markleville that night, where he left her under an assumed name, and came along to San Francisco and the Mission of San Antonio. Here he learned from the last witness, the prisoner's sister, Grace Conroy, of the arrest of her brother for murder. Witness at once returned to One Horse Gulch, only to find the administration of justice in the hands of a vigilance committee. Feeling that his own life might be sacrificed without saving the prisoner's, he took refuge in a tunnel on Conroy's Hill. It chanced to be the same tunnel which Gabriel Conroy and his friend afterwards sought in escaping from the vigilance committee after the earthquake. Witness, during the absence of Gabriel, made himself known to Mr. Jack Hamlin, Gabriel's friend and comrade in flight, and assured him of the witness's intention to come forward whenever a fair trial could be accorded to Gabriel. After the re-arrest and bailing of Gabriel, witness returned to San Francisco to procure evidence regarding the forged grant, and proofs of Ramirez's persecution of Mrs. Conroy. Had brought with him the knife, and had found the cutler who sold it to deceased eight months before, when deceased first meditated an assault on Mrs. Conroy. Objected to, and objection overruled by a deeply interested and excited court.

"That is all," said Arthur.

Colonel Starbottle, seated beside Grace Conroy, did not, for a moment, respond to the impatient eyes of the audience in the hush that followed. It was not until Grace Conroy whispered a few words in his ear, that the gallant Colonel lifted his dilated breast and self-complacent face above the level of the seated counsel.

"What — er — er — was the reason — why did the — er — er — deeply anxious wife, who fled with you, and thus precipitated the arrest of her husband — why did not she return with you to clear him from suspicion? Why does she remain *absent?*"

"She was taken ill, dangerously ill, at Markleville. The excitement and fatigue of the journey had brought on premature confinement. A child was born" —

There was a sudden stir among the group beside the prisoner's chair. Colonel Starbottle, with a hurried glance at Grace Conroy, waved his hand toward the witness and sat down.

Arthur Poinsett rose. "We ask a moment's delay, your Honor. The prisoner has fallen in a fit."

CHAPTER VII

A FAMILY GREETING

WHEN Gabriel opened his eyes to consciousness, he was lying on the floor of the jury room, his head supported by Olly, and a slight, graceful, womanly figure, that had been apparently bending over him, in the act of slowly withdrawing from his awakening gaze. It was his sister Grace.

"Thar, you 're better now," said Olly, taking her brother's hand, and quietly ignoring her sister, on whom Gabriel's eyes were still fixed. "Try and raise yourself inter this chair. Thar — thar now — that 's a good old Gabe — thar! I reckon you 're more comfortable!"

"It 's Gracey!" whispered Gabriel hoarsely, with his eyes still fixed upon the slight, elegantly dressed woman, who now, leaning against the doorway, stood coldly regarding him. "It 's Gracey — your sister, Olly!"

"Ef you mean the woman who hez been tryin' her best to swar away your life, and kem here allowin' to do it — she ain't no sister o' mine; not," added Olly, with a withering glance at the simple elegance of her sister's attire, — "not even ef she does traipse in yer in frills and tuckers — more shame for her!"

"If you mean," said Grace coldly, "the girl whose birthright you took away by marrying the woman who stole it, — if you mean the girl who rightfully bears the name that you denied, under oath, in the very shadow of the gallows, she claims nothing of you but her name."

"Thet 's so," said Gabriel, simply. He dropped his head between his great hands, and a sudden tremor shook his huge frame.

"Ye ain't goin' to be driv inter hysteriks agin along o' that crokodill," said Olly, bending over her brother in alarm. "Don't ye — don't ye cry, Gabe!" whimpered Olly, as a few drops oozed between Gabriel's fingers; "don't ye take on, darling, *afore her!*"

The two sisters glared at each other over the helpless man between them. Then another woman entered who looked sympathetically at Gabriel and then glared at them both. It was Mrs. Markle. At which, happily for Gabriel, the family bickering ceased.

"It 's all over, Gabriel! you 're cl'ar!" said Mrs. Markle, ignoring the sympathies as well as the presence of the two other ladies. "Here 's Mr. Poinsett."

He entered quickly, but stopped and flushed slightly under the cold eyes of Grace Conroy. But only for a moment. Coming to Gabriel's side, he said kindly, "Gabriel, I congratulate you. The acting district attorney has entered a *nolle prosequi*, and you are discharged."

"Ye mean I kin go?" said Gabriel, suddenly lifting his face.

"Yes. You are as free as air."

"And ez to *her?*" asked Gabriel quickly.

"Whom do you mean?" replied Arthur, involuntarily glancing in the direction of Grace, whose eyes dropped scornfully before him.

"My wife — July — is *she* cl'ar too?"

"As far as this trial is concerned, yes," returned Arthur, with a trifle less interest in his voice, which Gabriel was quick to discern.

"Then I 'll go," said Gabriel, rising to his feet. He made a few steps to the door and then hesitated, stopped, and turned toward Grace. As he did so his old apologetic, troubled, diffident manner returned.

"Ye 'll exkoos me, miss," he said, looking with troubled eyes upon his newly-found sister, — "ye 'll exkoos me, ef I

have n't the time now to do the agreeable and show ye over yer property on Conroy's Hill. But it 's thar! It 's all thar, ez Lawyer Maxwell kin testify. It 's all thar and the house is open, ez it always was to ye, ez the young woman who keeps the house kin tell ye. I 'd go thar with ye ef I hed time, but I 'm startin' out now, to-night, to see July. To see my wife, Miss Conroy, — to see July ez is expectin' ! And I reckon thar 'll be a baby — a pore little, helpless newborn baby — on'y *so* long ! " added Gabriel, exhibiting his forefingers as a degree of mensuration; " and ez a fammerly man, being ladies, I reckon you reckon I oughter be thar." (I grieve to state that at this moment the ladies appealed to exchanged a glance of supreme contempt, and am proud to record that Lawyer Maxwell and Mr. Poinsett exhibited the only expression of sympathy with the speaker that was noticeable in the group.)

Arthur detected it and said, I fear none the less readily for that knowledge,—

" Don't let us keep you, Gabriel; we understand your feelings. Go at once."

" Take me along, Gabe," said Olly, flashing her eyes at her sister, and then turning to Gabriel with a quivering upper lip.

Gabriel turned, swooped his tremendous arm around Olly, lifted her bodily off her feet, and saying, " You 're my own little girl," vanished through the doorway.

This movement reduced the group to Mrs. Markle and Grace Conroy, confronted by Mr. Poinsett and Maxwell. Mrs. Markle relieved an embarrassing silence by stepping forward and taking the arm of Lawyer Maxwell and leading him away. Arthur and Grace were left alone.

For the first time in his life Arthur lost his readiness and self-command. He glanced awkwardly at the woman before him, and felt that neither conventional courtesy nor vague sentimental recollection would be effective here.

"I am waiting for my maid," said Grace coldly; "if, as you return to the court-room, you will send her here, you will oblige me."

Arthur bowed confusedly.

"Your maid" —

"Yes; you know her, I think, Mr. Poinsett," continued Grace, lifting her arched brows with cold surprise. "Manuela!"

Arthur turned pale and red. He was conscious of being not only awkward but ridiculous.

"Pardon me — perhaps I am troubling you — I will go myself," said Grace contemptuously.

"One moment, Miss Conroy," said Arthur, instinctively stepping before her as she moved as if to pass him, — "one moment, I beg." He paused, and then said, with less deliberation and more impulsively than had been his habit for the last six years, "You will, perhaps, be more forgiving to your brother if you know that I, who have had the pleasure of meeting you since — you were lost to us all — I, who have not had his preoccupation of interest in another — even I, have been as blind, as foolish, as seemingly heartless as he. You will remember this, Miss Conroy — I hope quite as much for its implied compliment to your complete disguise, and an evidence of the success of your own endeavors to obliterate your identity, as for its being an excuse for your brother's conduct, if not for my own. *I* did not know you."

Grace Conroy paused and raised her dark eyes to his.

"You spoke of my brother's preoccupation with — with the woman for whom he would have sacrificed anything — *me* — his very life! I can — I am a woman — I can understand *that!* You have forgotten, Don Arturo, you have forgotten — pardon me — I am not finding fault — it is not *for me* to find fault — but you have forgotten — Doña *Maria Sepulvida!*"

ARTHUR TURNED PALE AND RED

She swept by him with a rustle of silk and lace, and was gone. His heart gave a sudden bound; he was about to follow her, when he was met at the door by the expanding bosom of Colonel Starbottle.

"Permit me, sir, as a gentleman, as a man of — er — er — er — honor! to congratulate you, sir! When we — er — er — parted in San Francisco I did not think that I would have the — er — er — pleasure — a rare pleasure to Colonel Starbottle, sir, in his private as well as his — er — er — public capacity, of — er — er — a PUBLIC APOLOGY. Ged, sir! I have made it! Ged, sir! when I entered that *nolle pros.*, I said to myself, 'Star., this is an apology — an apology, sir! But you are responsible, sir, you are responsible, Star.! personally responsible!'"

"I thank you," said Arthur abstractedly, still straining his eyes after the retreating figure of Grace Conroy, and trying to combat a sudden instinctive jealousy of the man before him, — "I thank you, Colonel, on behalf of my client and myself."

"Ged, sir," said Colonel Starbottle, blocking up the way, with a general expansiveness of demeanor," — Ged, sir, this is not all. You will remember that our recent interview in San Francisco was regarding another and a different issue. That, sir, I am proud to say, the developments of evidence in this trial have honorably and — er —er — as a lawyer, I may say, have legally settled. With the — er — er — identification and legal — er — er — rehabilitation of Grace Conroy, that claim of my client falls to the ground. You may state to your client, Mr. Poinsett, that — er — er — upon my own personal responsibility I abandon the claim."

Arthur Poinsett stopped and looked fixedly at the gallant Colonel. Even in his sentimental preoccupation the professional habit triumphed.

"You withdraw Mrs. Dumphy's claim upon Mr. Dumphy?" he said slowly.

Colonel Starbottle did not verbally reply, but that gallant warrior allowed the facial muscles on the left side of his face to relax so that one eye was partially closed.

"Yes, sir, — there is a matter of a few thousand dollars that, — er — er — you understand, I am — er — er — personally responsible for."

"That will never be claimed, Colonel Starbottle," said Arthur, smiling, "and I am only echoing, I am sure, the sentiments of the man most concerned, who is approaching us — Mr. Dumphy."

CHAPTER VIII

IN WHICH THE FOOTPRINTS RETURN

MR. JACK HAMLIN was in very bad case. When Dr. Duchesne, who had been summoned from Sacramento, arrived, that eminent surgeon had instantly assumed such light-heartedness and levity toward his patient, such captiousness toward Pete, with an occasional seriousness of demeanor when he was alone, that, to those who knew him, it was equal to an unfavorable prognosis. Indeed, he evaded the direct questioning of Olly, who had lately constituted herself a wondrously light-footed, soft-handed assistant of Pete, until one day, when they were alone, he asked more seriously than was his wont if Mr. Hamlin had ever spoken of his relations, or if she knew of any of his friends who were accessible.

Olly had already turned this subject over in her womanly mind, and had thought once or twice of writing to the Blue Moselle, but on the direct questioning of the doctor, and its peculiar significance, she recalled Jack's confidences on their midnight ride, and the Spanish beauty he had outlined; and so one evening, when she was alone with her patient, and the fever was low, and Jack lay ominously patient and submissive, she began — what the doctor had only lately abandoned — probing a half-healed wound.

"I reckon you 'd hev been a heap more comfortable ef this thing hed happened to ye down thar in San Antonio," said Olly.

Jack rolled his dark eyes wonderingly upon his fair persecutor.

"You know you 'd hev had thet thar sweetheart o' yours — thet Mexican woman — sittin' by ye, instead o' me — and Pete," suggested the artful Olympia.

Jack nearly leaped from the bed.

"Do you reckon I 'd hev rung myself in as a wandering cripple — a tramp thet hed got peppered — on a lady like *her?* Look yer, Olly," continued Mr. Hamlin, raising himself on his elbow, "if you 've got the idea thet thet woman is one of them hospital sharps — one of them angels who waltz round a sick man with a bottle of camphor in one hand and a tract in the other — you had better disabuse your mind of it at once, Miss Conroy; take a back seat and wait for a new deal. And don't you go to talkin' of thet lady as my sweetheart — it 's — it 's — sacrilegious — and the meanest kind of a bluff,"

As the day of the trial drew near, Mr. Hamlin had expressed but little interest in it, and had evidently only withheld his general disgust of Gabriel's weakness from consideration of his sister. Once Mr. Hamlin condescended to explain his apparent coldness.

"There 's a witness coming, Olly, that 'll clear your brother — more shame for him — the man ez *did* kill Ramirez. I 'm keeping my sympathies for that chap. Don't you be alarmed. If that man don't come up to the scratch I will. So — don't you go whining round. And ef you 'll take my advice, you 'll keep clear o' that court, and let them lawyers fight it out. It will be time enough for you to go when they send for *me.*"

"But you can't move — you ain't strong enough," said Olly.

"I reckon Pete will get me there some way, if he has to pack me on his back. I ain't a heavy weight now," said Jack, looking sadly at his thin white hands. "I 've reck-*oned on* that, and even if I should pass in my checks, *there 's an affidavit* already sworn to in Maxwell's hands."

Nevertheless, on the day of the trial, Olly, still doubtful of Gabriel, and still mindful of his capacity to develop "God-forsaken mulishness," was nervous and uneasy, until a messenger arrived from Maxwell with a note to Hamlin, carrying the tidings of the appearance of Perkins in court, and closing with a request for Olly's presence.

"Who 's Perkins?" asked Olly, as she reached for her hat in nervous excitement.

"He 's no slouch," said Jack sententiously. "Don't ask questions. It 's all right with Gabriel now," he added assuringly. "He 's as good as clear. Run away, Miss Conroy. Hold up a minit! There, kiss me! Look here, Olly, say! — do you take any stock in that lost sister of yours that your fool of a brother is always gabbing about? You do? Well, you are as big a fool as he. There! There! — never mind now — she 's turned up at last! Much good may it do you. One! two! — go!" and as Olly's pink ribbons flashed through the doorway, Mr. Hamlin lay down again with a twinkle in his eye.

He was alone. The house was very quiet and still; most of the guests, and the hostess and her assistant, were at the all-absorbing trial; even the faithful Pete, unconscious of any possible defection of his assistant, Olly, had taken the opportunity to steal away to hear the arguments of counsel. As the retreating footsteps of Olly echoed along the vacant corridor, he felt that he possessed the house completely.

This consciousness to a naturally active man, bored by illness and the continuous presence of attendants, however kind and devoted, was at first a relief. Mr. Hamlin experienced an instant desire to get up and dress himself, to do various things which were forbidden — but which now an overruling Providence had apparently placed within his reach. He rose with great difficulty, and a physical weakness that seemed altogether inconsistent with the ex-

citement he was then feeling, and partially dressed himself. Then he was suddenly overtaken with great faintness and vertigo, and struggling to the open window, fell in a chair beside it. The cool breeze revived him for a moment, and he tried to rise, but found it impossible. Then the faintness and vertigo returned, and he seemed to be slipping away somewhere — not altogether unpleasantly, nor against his volition — somewhere where there was darkness and stillness and rest. And then he slipped back, almost instantly as it seemed to him, to a room full of excited and anxious people, all extravagantly, and as he thought ridiculously, concerned about himself. He tried to assure them that he was all right, and not feeling any worse for his exertion, but was unable to make them understand him. Then followed night, replete with pain, and filled with familiar voices that spoke unintelligibly; and then day, devoted to the monotonous repetition of the last word or phrase that the doctor, or Pete, or Olly had used, or the endless procession of Olly's pink ribbons, and the tremulousness of a window curtain, or the black, sphinx-like riddle of a pattern on the bed-quilt or the wall-paper. Then there was sleep that was turbulent and conscious, and wakefulness that was lethargic and dim; and then infinite weariness, and then lapses of utter vacuity — the occasional ominous impinging of the shadow of death.

But through this chaos there was always a dominant central figure — a figure partly a memory, and, as such, surrounded by consistent associations; partly a reality and incongruous with its surroundings — the figure of Doña Dolores! But whether this figure came back to Mr. Hamlin out of the dusky arches of the mission church in a cloud of incense, besprinkling him with holy water, or whether it bent over him, touching his feverish lips with *cool drinks,* or smoothing his pillow, a fact utterly unreal *and preposterous* seen against the pattern of the wall-paper,

or sitting on the familiar chair by his bedside — it was always there. And when, one day, the figure stayed longer, and the interval of complete consciousness seemed more protracted, Mr. Hamlin, with one mighty effort, moved his lips and said feebly, —

"Doña Dolores!"

The figure started, leaned its beautiful face, blushing a celestial rosy red, above his own, put its finger to its perfect lips, and said in plain English, —

"Hush! I am Gabriel Conroy's sister."

CHAPTER IX

IN WHICH MR. HAMLIN PASSES

WITH his lips sealed by the positive mandate of the lovely spectre, Mr. Hamlin resigned himself again to weakness and sleep. When he awoke, Olly was sitting by his bedside; the dusky figure of Pete, spectacled and reading a good book, was dimly outlined against the window — but that was all. The vision — if vision it was — had fled.

"Olly," said Mr. Hamlin faintly.

"Yes!" said Olly, opening her eyes in expectant sympathy.

"How long have I been dr— I mean how long has this — spell lasted?"

"Three days," said Olly.

"The —— you say!" (A humane and possibly weak consideration for Mr. Hamlin in his new weakness and suffering restricts me to a mere outline of his extravagance of speech.)

"But you 're better now," supplemented Olly.

Mr. Hamlin began to wonder faintly if his painful experience of the last twenty-four hours were a part of his convalescence. He was silent for a few moments, and then suddenly turned his face toward Olly.

"Did n't you say something about — about — your sister, the other day?"

"Yes — she 's got back," said Olly curtly.

"Here?"

"Here."

"*Well?*" *said* Mr. Hamlin, a little impatiently.

"Well," returned Olly, with a slight toss of her curls, "she 's got back, and I reckon it 's about time she did."

Strange to say, Olly's evident lack of appreciation of her sister seemed to please Mr. Hamlin — possibly because it agreed with his own idea of Grace's superiority and his inability to recognize or accept her as a sister of Gabriel.

"Where has she been all this while?" asked Jack, rolling his large hollow eyes over Olly.

"Goodness knows! Says she 's bin livin' in some fammerly down in the South — Spanish, I reckon; thet 's whar she gits those airs and graces."

"Has she ever been here — in this room?" asked Mr. Hamlin.

"Of course she has," said Olly. "When I left you to go with Gabe to see his wife at Wingdam, she volunteered to take my place. Thet waz while you waz flighty, Mr. Hamlin. But I reckon she admired to stay here on account of seein' her bo!"

"Her what?" asked Mr. Hamlin, feeling the blood fast rushing to his colorless face.

"Her bo," repeated Olly, "thet thar Ashley, or Poinsett — or whatever he calls hisself now!"

Mr. Hamlin here looked so singular, and his hand tightened so strongly around Olly's, that she hurriedly repeated to him the story of Grace's early wanderings, and her absorbing passion for their former associate, Arthur Poinsett. The statement was, in Olly's present state of mind, not favorable to Grace. "And she just came up yer only to see Arthur ag'in. That 's all. And she nearly swearin' her brother's life away — and pretendin' it was only done to save the fammerly name. Jest ez if it hed been any more comfortable fur Gabriel to have been hung in his own name. And then goin' and accusin' thet innocent ole lamb, Gabe, of conspiring with July to take her name away. Purty goin's on, I reckon. And thet man Poinsett, by her own showin'

— never lettin' on to see her nor us — nor anybody. And she sassin' *me* for givin' my opinion of him — and excusin' him by sayin' she did n't want him to know *whar* she was. And she refusin' to see July at all — and pore July lyin' thar at Wingdam, sick with a new baby. Don't talk to me about her!"

"But your sister did n't run away with — with — this chap. She went away to bring you help," interrupted Jack, hastily dragging Olly back to earlier history.

"Did she? Could n't she trust her bo to go and get help and then come back fur her? — reckonin' he cared for her at all. No, she waz thet crazy after him she could n't trust him outer her sight — and she left the camp and Gabe and ME for him. And then the idee of *her* talking to Gabriel about bein' disgraced by July. Ez ef she had never done anythin' to spile her own name, and puttin' on such airs and" —

"Dry up!" shouted Mr. Hamlin, turning with sudden savageness upon his pillow. "Dry up! — don't you see you 're driving me half crazy with your infernal buzzing?" He paused, as Olly stopped in mingled mortification and alarm, and then added in milder tones, "There, that 'll do. I am not feeling well to-day. Send Dr. Duchesne to me if he 's here. Stop one moment — there! Good-by, go!"

Olly had risen promptly. There was always something in Mr. Hamlin's positive tones that commanded an obedience that she would have refused to any other. Thoroughly convinced of some important change in Mr. Hamlin's symptoms, she sought the doctor at once. Perhaps she brought with her some of her alarm and anxiety, for a moment later that distinguished physician entered with less deliberation than was his habit. He walked to the bedside of his patient, and would have taken his hand, but Jack slipped his *telltale* pulse under the covers, and looking fixedly at the *doctor, said*: —

"Can I be moved from here?"

"You can, but I should hardly advise" —

"I did n't ask that. This is a lone hand I 'm playin', doctor, and if I 'm euchred, 't ain't your fault. How soon?"

"I should say," said Dr. Duchesne, with professional caution, "that if no bad symptoms supervene" (he made here a half-habitual but wholly ineffectual dive for Jack's pulse), "you might go in a week."

"I must go *now!*"

Dr. Duchesne bent over his patient. He was a quick as well as a patiently observing man, and he saw something in Jack's face that no one else had detected. Seeing this he said, "You can go now, at a great risk — the risk of your life."

"I 'll take it!" said Mr. Hamlin promptly. "I 've been playin' agin odds," he added, with a faint but audacious smile, "for the last six months, and it 's no time to draw out now. Go on, tell Pete to pack up and get me ready."

"Where are you going?" asked the doctor quietly, still gazing at his patient.

"To! — blank!" said Mr. Hamlin impulsively. Then recognizing the fact that, in view of his having traveling companions, some more definite and practicable locality was necessary, he paused a moment, and said, "To the Mission of San Antonio."

"Very well," said the doctor gravely.

Strange to say, whether from the doctor's medication, or from the stimulus of some reserved vitality hitherto unsuspected, Mr. Hamlin from that moment rallied. The preparations for his departure were quickly made, and in a few hours he was ready for the road.

"I don't want to have anybody cacklin' around me," he said, in deprecation of any leave-taking. "I leave the board, they can *go* on with the game."

Notwithstanding which, at the last moment, Gabriel hung awkwardly and heavily around the carriage in which the invalid was seated.

"I'd foller arter ye, Mr. Hamlin, in a buggy," he interpolated, in gentle deprecation of his unwieldy and difficult bulk, "but I'm sorter kept yer with my wife — who is powerful weak along of a pore small baby — about so long — the same not bein' a fammerly man yourself, you don't kinder get the hang of. I thought it might please ye to know that I got bail yesterday for thet Mr. Perkins — ez did n't kill that thar Ramirez — the same havin' killed hisself — ez waz fetched out on the trial, which I reckon ye did n't get to hear. I admire to see ye lookin' so well, Mr. Hamlin, and I 'm glad Olly 's goin' with ye. I reckon Grace would hev gone too, but she 's sorter skary about strangers, hevin' bin engaged these seving years to a young man by the name o' Poinsett ez waz one o' my counsel, and hevin' lately had a row with the same — one o' them lovers' fights — which bein' a young man yourself, ye kin kindly allow for."

"Drive on!" imprecated Mr. Hamlin furiously to the driver; "what are you waiting for?" and with the whirling wheels Gabriel dropped off apologetically in a cloud of dust, and Mr. Hamlin sank back exhaustedly on the cushions.

Notwithstanding, as he increased his distance from One Horse Gulch, his spirits seemed to rise, and by the time they had reached San Antonio he had recovered his old audacity and dash of manner, and raised the highest hopes in the breast of everybody but — his doctor. Yet that gentleman, after a careful examination of his patient one night, said privately to Pete, "I think this exaltation will last about three days longer. I am going to San Francisco. At the end of that time I shall return — unless you telegraph to me before that." He parted gayly from his pa-

tient, and seriously from everybody else. Before he left he sought out Padre Felipe. "I have a patient here, in a critical condition," said the doctor; "the hotel is no place for him. Is there any family here — any house that will receive him under your advice for a week? At the end of that time he will be better, — or beyond *our* ministration. He is not a Protestant — he is nothing. You have had experience with the heathen, Father Felipe."

Father Felipe looked at Dr. Duchesne. The doctor's well-earned professional fame had penetrated even San Antonio; the doctor's insight and intelligence were visible in his manner, and touched the Jesuit instantly. "It is a strange case, my son; a sad case," he said thoughtfully. "I will see."

He did. The next day, under the directions of Father Felipe, Mr. Hamlin was removed to the Rancho of the Blessed Fisherman, and notwithstanding the fact that its hostess was absent, was fairly installed as its guest. When Mrs. Sepulvida returned from her visit to San Francisco, she was at first astonished, then excited, and then, I fear, gratified.

For she at once recognized in this guest of Father Felipe the mysterious stranger whom she had, some weeks ago, detected on the plains of the Blessed Trinity. And Jack, despite his illness, was still handsome, and had, moreover, the melancholy graces of invalidism, which go far with an habitually ailing sex. And so she coddled Mr. Hamlin, and gave him her sacred hammock over the porch by day, and her best bedroom at night. And then, at the close of a pleasant day, she said archly, —

"I think I have seen you before, Mr. Hamlin — at the Rancho of the Blessed Trinity. You remember — the house of Doña Dolores?"

Mr. Hamlin was too observant of the sex to be impertinently *mindful of* another woman than his interlocutor, *and assented with* easy indifference.

Doña Maria (now thoroughly convinced that Mr. Hamlin's attentions on that eventful occasion were intended for herself, and even delightfully suspicious of some prearranged plan in his present situation): "Poor Doña Dolores! You know we have lost her forever."

Mr. Hamlin asked, "When?"

"That dreadful earthquake on the 8th."

Mr. Hamlin, reflecting that the appearance of Grace Conroy was on the 10th, assented again abstractedly.

"Ah, yes! so sad! And yet, perhaps, for the best. You know the poor girl had a hopeless passion for her legal adviser — the famous Arthur Poinsett! Ah! you did not? Well, perhaps it was only merciful that she died before she knew how insincere that man's attentions were. You are a believer in special providences, Mr. Hamlin?"

Mr. Hamlin (doubtfully): "You mean a run of luck?"

Doña Maria (rapidly), ignoring Mr. Hamlin's illustration): "Well, perhaps *I* have reason to say so. Poor Doña Dolores was my friend. Yet, would you believe there were people — you know how ridiculous is the gossip of a town like this — there are people who believed that he was paying attention to ME!"

Mrs. Sepulvida hung her head archly. There was a long pause. Then Mr. Hamlin called faintly, —

"Pete!"

"Yes, Mars Jack."

"Ain't it time to take that medicine?"

When Dr. Duchesne returned he ignored all this little byplay, and even the anxious inquiries of Olly, and said to Mr. Hamlin, —

"Have you any objection to my sending for Dr. Mackintosh — a devilish clever fellow?"

And Mr. Hamlin had none. And so, after a private telegram, Dr. Mackintosh arrived, and for three or four hours the two doctors talked in an apparently unintel-

ligible language, chiefly about a person who Mr. Hamlin was satisfied did not exist. And when Dr. Mackintosh left, Dr. Duchesne, after a very earnest conversation with him on their way to the stage office, drew a chair beside Mr. Hamlin's bed.

"Jack!"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you got everything fixed — all right?"

"Yes, sir."

"Jack!"

"Yes, sir."

"You 've made Pete very happy this morning."

Jack looked up at Dr. Duchesne's critical face, and the doctor went on gravely, —

"Confessing religion to him — saying you believed as he did!"

A faint laugh glimmered in the dark hollows of Jack's eyes.

"The old man," he said explanatorily, "has been preachin' mighty heavy at me ever since t' other doctor came, and I reckoned it might please him to allow that everything he said was so. You see the old man 's bin right soft on me, and between us, doctor, I ain't much to give him in exchange. It 's no square game!"

"Then you believe you 're going to die?" said the doctor gravely.

"I reckon."

"And you have no directions to give me?"

"There 's a black hound at Sacramento, — Jim Briggs, — who borrowed and never gave back my silver-mounted Derringers, that I reckoned to give to you! Tell him he 'd better give them up, or I 'll" —

"Jack," interrupted Dr. Duchesne, with infinite gentleness, laying his hand on the invalid's arm, "you must not think of me."

Jack pressed his friend's hand.

"There 's my diamond pin up the spout at Wingdam, and the money gone to Lawyer Maxwell to pay witnesses for that old fool Gabriel. And then when Gabriel and me was escaping I happened to strike the very man, Perkins, who was Gabriel's principal witness, and he was dead broke, and I had to give him my solitaire ring to help him get away and be on hand for Gabriel. And Olly 's got my gold specimen to be made into a mug for that cub of that old she tiger — Gabriel's woman — that Madame Devarges. And my watch — Who *has* got my watch?" said Mr. Hamlin reflectively.

"Never mind those things, Jack. Have you any word to send — to — anybody?"

"No."

There was a long pause. In the stillness the ticking of a clock on the mantel became audible. Then there was a laugh in the anteroom, where a professional brother of Jack's had been waiting, slightly under the influence of grief and liquor.

"Scotty ought to know better than to kick up a row in a decent woman's house," whispered Jack faintly. "Tell him to dry up, or I 'll" —

But his voice was failing him, and the sentence remained incomplete.

"Doc—" (after a long effort).

"Jack."

"Don't — let — on — to Pete — I fooled — him."

"No, Jack."

They were both still for several minutes. And then Dr. Duchesne softly released his hand and laid that of his patient, white and thin, upon the coverlid before him. Then he rose gently and opened the door of the anteroom. Two or three eager faces confronted him. "Pete," he said *gravely.* "*I* want Pete — no one else."

The old negro entered with a trembling step. And then catching sight of the white face on the pillow, he uttered one cry — a cry replete with all the hysterical pathos of his race, — and ran and dropped on his knees beside it! And then the black and the white face were near together, and both were wet with tears.

Dr. Duchesne stepped forward and would have laid his hand gently upon the old servant's shoulder. But he stopped, for suddenly both of the black hands were lifted wildly in the air, and the black face with rapt eyeballs turned toward the ceiling, as if they had caught sight of the steadfast blue beyond. Perhaps they had.

"O de Lord God! whose prechiss blood washes de brack sheep and de white sheep all de one color! O de Lamb ob God! Sabe, sabe dis por', dis por' boy. O Lord God, for MY sake. O de Lord God, dow knowst fo' twenty years Pete, ole Pete, has walked in dy ways — has found de Lord and Him crucified! — and has been dy servant. O de Lord God — O de bressed Lord, ef it 's all de same to you, let all dat go fo' nowt. Let ole Pete go! and send down dy mercy and forgiveness fo' *him!*"

CHAPTER X

IN THE OLD CABIN AGAIN

THERE was little difficulty in establishing the validity of Grace Conroy's claim to the Conroy grant under the bequest of Dr. Devarges. Her identity was confirmed by Mr. Dumphy — none the less readily that it relieved him of a distressing doubt about the late Mrs. Dumphy, and did not affect his claim to the mineral discovery which he had purchased from Gabriel and his wife. It was true that since the dropping of the lead the mine had been virtually abandoned, and was comparatively of little market value. But Mr. Dumphy still clung to the hope that the missing lead would be discovered.

He was right. It was some weeks after the death of Mr. Hamlin that Gabriel and Olly stood again beneath the dismantled rooftree and bare walls of his old cabin on Conroy Hill. But the visit this time was not one of confidential disclosure nor lonely contemplation, but with a practical view of determining whether this first home of the brother and sister could be repaired and made habitable, for Gabriel had steadily refused the solicitations of Grace that he should occupy his more recent mansion. Mrs. Conroy and infant were at the hotel.

"Thar, Olly," said Gabriel, "I reckon that a cartload o' boards and a few days' work with willin' hands, will put that thar shanty back ag'in ez it used to be when you and me waz childun."

"*Yes,*" said Olly, abstractedly.

"*We 've had good* times yer, Olly, you and me!"

"Yes," said Olly, with eyes still afar.

Gabriel looked down — a great way — on his sister, and then suddenly took her hand and sat down upon the doorstep, drawing her between his knees after the old fashion.

"Ye ain't hearkenin' to me, Olly dear!"

Whereat Miss Olympia instantly and illogically burst into tears, and threw her small arms about Gabriel's huge bulk. She had been capricious and fretful since Mr. Hamlin's death, and it may be that she embraced the dead man again in her brother's arms. But her outward expression was, "Gracey! I was thinking o' poor Gracey, Gabe!"

"Then," said Gabriel, with intense archness and cunning, "you was thinkin' o' present kempany, for ef I ain't blind that 's them coming up the hill."

There were two figures slowly coming up the hill outlined against the rosy sunset. A man and woman, — Arthur Poinsett and Grace Conroy. Olly lifted her head and rose to her feet. They approached nearer. No one spoke. The next instant — impulsively, I admit; inconsistently, I protest — the sisters were in each other's arms. The two men looked at each other, awkward, reticent, superior.

Then the women having made quick work of it, the two men were treated to an equally illogical, inconsistent embrace. When Grace at last, crying and laughing, released Gabriel's neck from her sweet arms, Mr. Poinsett assumed the masculine attitude of pure reason.

"Now that you have found your sister, permit me to introduce you to my wife," he said to Gabriel, taking Grace's hand in his own.

Whereat Olly flew into Poinsett's arms, and gave him a fraternal and conciliatory kiss. Tableau.

"You don't look like a bride," said the practical Olly to Mrs. Poinsett, under her breath; "you ain't got no veil, no orange *blossoms* — and that black dress" —

"We've been married seven years, Olly," said the quick eared and ready-witted Arthur.

And then these people began to chatter as if they had always been in the closest confidence and communion.

"You know," said Grace to her brother, "Arthur and I are going East, to the States, to-morrow, and really, Gabe, he says he will not leave here until you consent to take back your house — your wife's house, Gabe. You know WE" (there was a tremendous significance in this newly-found personal plural) — "WE have deeded it all to you."

"I hev a dooty to per-form to Gracey," said Gabriel Conroy, with astute deliberation, looking at Mr. Poinsett, — "a dooty to thet gal, thet must be done afore any trans-fer of this yer proputty is made. I hev to make restitution of certain papers ez hez fallen casooally into my hands. This yer paper," he added, drawing a soiled yellow envelope from his pocket, "kem to me a week ago, the same hevin' lied in the express office sens the trial. It belongs to Gracey, I reckon, and I hands it to her."

Grace tore open the envelope, glanced at its contents hurriedly, uttered a slight cry of astonishment, blushed, and put the paper into her pocket.

"This yer paper," continued Gabriel gravely, drawing another from his blouse, "was found by me in the Empire Tunnel the night I was runnin' from the lynchers. It likewise b'longs to Gracey — and the world gin'rally. It's the record of Dr. Devarges's fust discovery of the silver lead on this yer hill, and," continued Gabriel, with infinite gravity, "wipes out, so to speak, this yer mineral right o' me and Mr. Dumphy and the stockholders gin'rally."

It was Mr. Poinsett's turn to take the paper from Gabriel's hands. He examined it attentively by the fading light. "That is so," he said earnestly; "it is quite legal *and valid.*"

"*And thar ez* one paper more," continued Gabriel, this

time putting his hand in his bosom and drawing out a buck-skin purse, from which he extracted a many-folded paper. "It 's the grant that Dr. Devarges gave Gracey, thet thet pore Mexican Ramirez ez — maybe ye may remember — waz killed handed to my wife, and July, my wife," — said Gabriel, with a prodigious blush, — "hez been sorter keepin' IN TRUST for Gracey!"

He gave the paper to Arthur, who received it, but still retained a warm grasp of Gabriel's massive hand.

"And now," added Gabriel, "et 's gettin' late, and I reckon et 's about the square thing ef we 'd ad-journ this yer meeting to the hotel, and ez you 're goin' away, maybe ye 'd make a partin' visit with yer wife, forgettin' and forgivin' like, to Mrs. Conroy and the baby — a pore little thing — that, ye would n't believe it, Mr. Poinsett, looks like me!"

But Olly and Grace had drawn aside, and were in the midst of an animated conversation. And Grace was saying, —

"So I took the stone from the fire, just as I take this" (she picked up a fragment of the crumbling chimney before her); "it looked black and burnt just like this; and I rubbed it hard on the blanket so, and it shone, just like silver, and Dr. Devarges said" —

"We are going, Grace," interrupted her husband, — "we are going to see Gabriel's wife."

Grace hesitated a moment, but as her husband took her arm he slightly pressed it with a certain matrimonial caution, whereupon, with a quick impulsive gesture, Grace held out her hand to Olly, and the three gayly followed the bowed figure of Gabriel as he strode through the darkening woods.

CHAPTER XI

THE RETURN OF A FOOTPRINT

I REGRET that no detailed account of the reconciliatory visit to Mrs. Conroy has been handed down, and I only gather a hint of it from after comments of the actors themselves. When the last words of parting had been said, and Grace and Arthur had taken their seats in the Wingdam coach, Gabriel bent over his wife's bedside, —

"It kinder seemed ez ef you and Mr. Poinsett recognized each other at first, July," said Gabriel.

"I *have* seen him before — not here! I don't think he'll ever trouble us much, Gabriel," said Mrs. Conroy, with a certain triumphant lighting of the cold fires of her gray eyes. "But look at the baby. He's laughing! He knows you, I declare!" And in Gabriel's rapt astonishment at this unprecedented display of intelligence in one so young, the subject was dropped.

"Why, where did you ever see Mrs. Conroy before?" asked Grace of her husband when they had reached Wingdam that night.

"I never saw *Mrs. Conroy* before," returned Arthur, with legal precision. "I met a lady in St. Louis years ago under another name, who, I dare say, is now your brother's wife. But — I think, Grace — the less we see of her — the better."

"Why?"

"By the way, darling, what was that paper that Gabriel *gave you?*" asked Arthur, lightly, avoiding the previous *question.*

WHILE HE READ ALOUD, IN SPANISH

Grace drew the paper from her pocket, blushed slightly, kissed her husband, and then putting her arms around his neck, laid her face in his breast, while he read aloud, in Spanish, the following: —

This is to give trustworthy statement that on the 18th of May, 1848, a young girl, calling herself Grace Conroy, sought shelter and aid at the Presidio of San Geronimo. Being friendless — but of the B. V. M. and the Saints — I adopted her as my daughter, with the name of Dolores Salvatierra. Six months after her arrival, on the 12th November, 1848, she was delivered of a dead child, the son of her affianced husband, one Philip Ashley. Wishing to keep her secret from the world and to prevent recognition by the members of her own race and family, by the assistance and advice of an Indian peon, Manuela, she consented that her face and hands should be daily washed by the juice of the Yokoto — whose effect is to change the skin to the color of bronze. With this metamorphosis she became known, by my advice and consent, as the daughter of the Indian Princess Nicata and myself. And as such I have recognized in due form her legal right in the apportionment of my estate.

Given at the Presidio of San Geronimo, this first day of December, 1848.

JOSÉ HERMENIZILDO SALVATIERRA.

"But how did Gabriel get this?" asked Arthur.

"I — don't — know!" said Grace.

"To whom did *you* give it?"

"To — Padre Felipe."

"Oh, I see!" said Arthur. "Then *you* are Mr. Dumphy's long-lost wife?"

"I don't know what Father Felipe did," said Grace, tossing her head slightly. "I put the matter in his hands."

"The whole story?"

"I said nothing about you — you great goose!"

Arthur kissed her by way of acknowledging the justice of the epithet.

"But I ought to have told Mrs. Sepulvida the whole story when she said you proposed to her. You're sure you did n't?" continued Grace, looking into her husband's eyes.

"Never," said that admirable young man promptly.

CHAPTER XII

FRAGMENT OF A LETTER FROM OLYMPIA CONROY TO GRACE POINSETT

• • • The baby is doing well. And only think — Gabe has struck it again! And you was the cause, dear — and he says it all belongs to you — like the old mule that he is. Don't you remember when you was telling me about Doctor Divergers giving you that rock and how you rubed it untill the silver shone, well, you took up a rock from our old chimbly and rubed it, while you was telling it. And thet rock Gabe came across next morning, all shining where you had rubed it. And shure enuff it was sollid silver. And then Gabe says, says he, "We 've struck it ag'in, fur the chimbly rock was taken from the first hole I dug on the hill only a hundred feet from here." And shure enuff, yesterday he purspected the hole and found the leed ag'in. And we are all very ritch ag'in and comin' to see you next yeer, only that Gabe is such a fool! Your loving sister,

Olympia Conroy.

BOHEMIAN PAPERS

MELONS

As I do not suppose the most gentle of readers will believe that anybody's sponsors in baptism ever willfully assumed the responsibility of such a name, I may as well state that I have reason to infer that Melons was simply the nickname of a small boy I once knew. If he had any other, I never knew it.

Various theories were often projected by me to account for this strange cognomen. His head, which was covered with a transparent down, like that which clothes very small chickens, plainly permitting the scalp to show through, to an imaginative mind might have suggested that succulent vegetable. That his parents, recognizing some poetical significance in the fruits of the season, might have given this name to an August child, was an Oriental explanation. That from his infancy he was fond of indulging in melons, seemed on the whole the most likely, particularly as Fancy was not bred in McGinnis's Court. He dawned upon me as Melons. His proximity was indicated by shrill, youthful voices, as "Ah, Melons!" or playfully, "Hi, Melons!" or authoritatively, "You, Melons!"

McGinnis's Court was a democratic expression of some obstinate and radical property holder. Occupying a limited space between two fashionable thoroughfares, it refused to conform to circumstances, but sturdily paraded its unkempt glories, and frequently asserted itself in ungrammatical lan-

guage. My window — a rear room on the ground floor — in this way derived blended light and shadow from the court. So low was the window-sill, that had I been the least predisposed to somnambulism it would have broken out under such favorable auspices, and I should have haunted McGinnis's Court. My speculations as to the origin of the court were not altogether gratuitous, for by means of this window I once saw the past, as through a glass darkly. It was a Celtic shadow that early one morning obstructed my ancient lights. It seemed to belong to an individual with a pea-coat, a stubby pipe, and bristling beard. He was gazing intently at the court, resting on a heavy cane, somewhat in the way that heroes dramatically visit the scenes of their boyhood. As there was little of architectural beauty in the court, I came to the conclusion that it was McGinnis looking after his property. The fact that he carefully kicked a broken bottle out of the road somewhat strengthened me in the opinion. But he presently walked away, and the court knew him no more. He probably collected his rents by proxy — if he collected them at all.

Beyond Melons, of whom all this is purely introductory, there was little to interest the most sanguine and hopeful nature. In common with all such localities, a great deal of washing was done in comparison with the visible results.

There was always something whisking on the line, and always something whisking through the court that looked as if it ought to be there. A fish-geranium — of all plants kept for the recreation of mankind certainly the greatest illusion — straggled under the window. Through its dusty leaves I caught the first glance of Melons.

His age was about seven. He looked older from the venerable whiteness of his head, and it was impossible to *conjecture his size*, as he always wore clothes apparently *belonging to* some shapely youth of nineteen. A pair of

pantaloons, that, when sustained by a single suspender, completely equipped him, formed his every-day suit. How, with this lavish superfluity of clothing, he managed to perform the surprising gymnastic feats it has been my privilege to witness, I have never been able to tell. His "turning the crab," and other minor dislocations, were always attended with success. It was not an unusual sight at any hour of the day to find Melons suspended on a line, or to see his venerable head appearing above the roofs of the outhouses. Melons knew the exact height of every fence in the vicinity, its facilities for scaling, and the possibility of seizure on the other side. His more peaceful and quieter amusements consisted in dragging a disused boiler by a large string, with hideous outcries, to imaginary fires.

Melons was not gregarious in his habits. A few youths of his own age sometimes called upon him, but they eventually became abusive, and their visits were more strictly predatory incursions for old bottles and junk, which formed the staple of McGinnis's Court. Overcome by loneliness, one day Melons inveigled a blind harper into the court. For two hours did that wretched man prosecute his unhallowed calling, unrecompensed, and going round and round the court, apparently under the impression that it was some other place, while Melons surveyed him from an adjoining fence with calm satisfaction. It was this absence of conscientious motives that brought Melons into disrepute with his aristocratic neighbors. Orders were issued that no child of wealthy and pious parentage should play with him. This mandate, as a matter of course, invested Melons with a fascinating interest to them. Admiring glances were cast at Melons from nursery windows. Baby fingers beckoned to him. Invitations to tea (on wood and pewter) were lisped to him from aristocratic back yards. It was evident he was looked upon as a pure and noble being, untrammeled by the conventionalities of parentage,

and physically as well as mentally exalted above them. One afternoon an unusual commotion prevailed in the vicinity of McGinnis's Court. Looking from my window, I saw Melons perched on the roof of a stable, pulling up a rope by which one "Tommy," an infant scion of an adjacent and wealthy house, was suspended in mid-air. In vain the female relatives of Tommy congregated in the back yard expostulated with Melons; in vain the unhappy father shook his fist at him. Secure in his position, Melons redoubled his exertions, and at last landed Tommy on the roof. Then it was that the humiliating fact was disclosed that Tommy had been acting in collusion with Melons. He grinned delightedly back at his parents, as if "by merit raised to that bad eminence." Long before the ladder arrived that was to succor him, he became the sworn ally of Melons, and, I regret to say, incited by the same audacious boy, chaffed his own flesh and blood below him. He was eventually taken, though of course Melons escaped. But Tommy was restricted to the window after that, and the companionship was limited to "Hi, Melons!" and "You, Tommy!" and Melons, to all practical purposes, lost him forever. I looked afterward to see some signs of sorrow on Melons's part, but in vain; he buried his grief, if he had any, somewhere in his one voluminous garment.

At about this time my opportunities of knowing Melons became more extended. I was engaged in filling a void in the literature of the Pacific Coast. As this void was a pretty large one, and as I was informed that the Pacific Coast languished under it, I set apart two hours each day to this work of filling in. It was necessary that I should adopt a methodical system, so I retired from the world and locked myself in my room at a certain hour each day, after coming from my office. I then carefully drew out my portfolio and read what I had written the day before. This

would suggest some alteration, and I would carefully rewrite it. During this operation I would turn to consult a book of reference, which invariably proved extremely interesting and attractive. It would generally suggest another and better method of "filling in." Turning this method over reflectively in my mind, I would finally commence the new method, which I eventually abandoned for the original plan. At this time I would become convinced that my exhausted faculties demanded a cigar. The operation of lighting a cigar usually suggested that a little quiet reflection and meditation would be of service to me, and I always allowed myself to be guided by prudential instincts. Eventually, seated by my window, as before stated, Melons asserted himself. Though our conversation rarely went further than "Hello, Mister!" and "Ah, Melons!" a vagabond instinct we felt in common implied a communion deeper than words. In this spiritual commingling the time passed, often beguiled by gymnastics on the fence or line (always with an eye to my window), until dinner was announced and I found a more practical void required my attention. An unlooked-for incident drew us in closer relation.

A seafaring friend just from a tropical voyage had presented me with a bunch of bananas. They were not quite ripe, and I hung them before my window to mature in the sun of McGinnis's Court, whose forcing qualities were remarkable. In the mysteriously mingled odors of ship and shore which they diffused throughout my room there was a lingering reminiscence of low latitudes. But even that joy was fleeting and evanescent: they never reached maturity.

Coming home one day, as I turned the corner of that fashionable thoroughfare before alluded to, I met a small boy eating a banana. There was nothing remarkable in that, but as I neared McGinnis's Court I presently met another small boy also eating a banana. A third small boy

engaged in a like occupation obtruded a painful coincidence upon my mind. I leave the psychological reader to determine the exact co-relation between this circumstance and the sickening sense of loss that overcame me on witnessing it. I reached my room — and found the bunch of bananas was gone.

There was but one who knew of their existence, but one who frequented my window, but one capable of the gymnastic effort to procure them, and that was — I blush to say it — Melons. Melons the depredator — Melons, despoiled by larger boys of his ill-gotten booty, or reckless and indiscreetly liberal; Melons — now a fugitive on some neighboring housetop. I lit a cigar, and drawing my chair to the window, sought surcease of sorrow in the contemplation of the fish-geranium. In a few moments something white passed my window at about the level of the edge. There was no mistaking that hoary head, which now represented to me only aged iniquity. It was Melons, that venerable, juvenile hypocrite!

He affected not to observe me, and would have withdrawn quietly, but that horrible fascination which causes the murderer to revisit the scene of his crime impelled him toward my window. I smoked calmly and gazed at him without speaking. He walked several times up and down the court with a half-rigid, half-belligerent expression of eye and shoulder, intended to represent the carelessness of innocence.

Once or twice he stopped, and putting his arms their whole length into his capacious trousers, gazed with some interest at the additional width they thus acquired. Then he whistled. The singular conflicting conditions of John Brown's body and soul were at that time beginning to attract the attention of youth, and Melons's performance *of that melody* was always remarkable. But to-day he *whistled falsely* and shrilly between his teeth. At last he

met my eye. He winced slightly, but recovered himself, and going to the fence, stood for a few moments on his hands, with his bare feet quivering in the air. Then he turned toward me and threw out a conversational preliminary.

"They is a cirkis," said Melons gravely, hanging with his back to the fence and his arms twisted around the palings — "a cirkis over yonder!" — indicating the locality with his foot — "with hosses, and hossback riders. They is a man wot rides six hosses to onct — six hosses to onct — and nary saddle" — and he paused in expectation.

Even this equestrian novelty did not affect me. I still kept a fixed gaze on Melons's eye, and he began to tremble and visibly shrink in his capacious garment. Some other desperate means — conversation with Melons was always a desperate means — must be resorted to. He recommenced more artfully.

"Do you know Carrots?"

I had a faint remembrance of a boy of that euphonious name, with scarlet hair, who was a playmate and persecutor of Melons. But I said nothing.

"Carrots is a bad boy. Killed a policeman onct. Wears a dirk knife in his boots. Saw him to-day looking in your windy."

I felt that this must end here. I rose sternly and addressed Melons.

"Melons, this is all irrelevant and impertinent to the case. *You* took those bananas. Your proposition regarding Carrots, even if I were inclined to accept it as credible information, does not alter the material issue. You took those bananas. The offense under the statutes of California is felony. How far Carrots may have been accessory to the fact either before or after, is not my intention at present to discuss. The act is complete. Your present conduct shows the animus *furandi* to have been equally clear."

By the time I had finished this exordium, Melons had disappeared, as I fully expected.

He never reappeared. The remorse that I have experienced for the part I had taken in what I fear may have resulted in his utter and complete extermination, alas! he may not know, except through these pages. For I have never seen him since. Whether he ran away and went to sea, to reappear at some future day as the most ancient of mariners, or whether he buried himself completely in his trousers, I never shall know. I have read the papers anxiously for accounts of him. I have gone to the police office in the vain attempt of identifying him as a lost child. But I have never seen or heard of him since. Strange fears have sometimes crossed my mind that his venerable appearance may have been actually the result of senility, and that he may have been gathered peacefully to his fathers in a green old age. I have even had doubts of his existence, and have sometimes thought that he was providentially and mysteriously offered to fill the void I have before alluded to. In that hope I have written these pages.

A VENERABLE IMPOSTOR

As I glance across my table, I am somewhat distracted by the spectacle of a venerable head whose crown occasionally appears beyond, at about its level. The apparition of a very small hand, whose fingers are bunchy and have the appearance of being slightly webbed, which is frequently lifted above the table in a vain and impotent attempt to reach the inkstand, always affects me as a novelty at each recurrence of the phenomenon. Yet both the venerable head and bunchy fingers belong to an individual with whom I am familiar, and to whom, for certain reasons hereafter described, I choose to apply the epithet written above this article.

His advent in the family was attended with peculiar circumstances. He was received with some concern, the number of retainers having been increased by one in honor of his arrival. He appeared to be weary, — his pretense was that he had come from a long journey, — so that for days, weeks, and even months, he did not leave his bed except when he was carried. But it was remarkable that his appetite was invariably regular and healthy, and that his meals, which he required should be brought to him, were seldom rejected. During this time he had little conversation with the family, his knowledge of our vernacular being limited, but occasionally spoke to himself in his own language, — a foreign tongue. The difficulties attending this eccentricity were obviated by the young woman who had from the first taken him under her protection, — being, like the rest of her sex, peculiarly open to imposi-

tions, — and who at once disorganized her own tongue to suit his. This was effected by the contraction of the syllables of some words, the addition of syllables to others, and an ingenious disregard for tenses and the governing powers of the verb. The same singular law which impels people in conversation with foreigners to imitate their broken English governed the family in their communications with him. He received these evidences of his power with an indifference not wholly free from scorn. The expression of his eye would occasionally denote that his higher nature revolted from them. I have no doubt myself that his wants were frequently misinterpreted; that the stretching forth of his hands toward the moon and stars might have been the performance of some religious rite peculiar to his own country, which was in ours misconstrued into a desire for physical nourishment. His repetition of the word "goo-goo," — which was subject to a variety of opposite interpretations, — when taken in conjunction with his size, in my mind seemed to indicate his aboriginal or Aztec origin.

I incline to this belief as it sustains the impression I have already hinted at, that his extreme youth is a simulation and deceit; that he is really older and has lived before at some remote period, and that his conduct fully justifies his title as A Venerable Impostor. A variety of circumstances corroborate this impression: his tottering walk, which is a senile as well as a juvenile condition; his venerable head, thatched with such imperceptible hair that, at a distance, it looks like a mild aureole, and his imperfect dental exhibition. But beside these physical peculiarities may be observed certain moral symptoms, which go to disprove his assumed youth. He is in the habit of falling into reveries, caused, I have no doubt, by some circumstance which suggests a comparison with his experience in *his remoter* boyhood, or by some serious retrospection of

the past years. He has been detected lying awake at times when he should have been asleep, engaged in curiously comparing the bedclothes, walls, and furniture with some recollection of his youth. At such moments he has been heard to sing softly to himself fragments of some unintelligible composition, which probably still linger in his memory as the echoes of a music he has long outgrown. He has the habit of receiving strangers with the familiarity of one who had met them before, and to whom their antecedents and peculiarities were matters of old acquaintance; and so unerring is his judgment of their previous character, that when he withholds his confidence I am apt to withhold mine. It is somewhat remarkable that while the maturity of his years and the respect due to them is denied by man, his superiority and venerable age are never questioned by the brute creation. The dog treats him with a respect and consideration accorded to no others, and the cat permits a familiarity which I should shudder to attempt. It may be considered an evidence of some pantheistic quality in his previous education that he seems to recognize a fellowship even in inarticulate objects; he has been known to verbally address plants, flowers, and fruit, and to extend his confidence to such inanimate objects as chairs and tables. There can be little doubt that, in the remote period of his youth, these objects were endowed with not only sentient natures, but moral capabilities, and he is still in the habit of beating them when they collide with him, and of pardoning them with a kiss.

As he has grown older — rather let me say, as we have approximated to his years — he has, in spite of the apparent paradox, lost much of his senile gravity. It must be confessed that some of his actions of late appear to our imperfect comprehension inconsistent with his extreme age. A habit of marching up and down with a string tied to a soda-water bottle; a disposition to ride anything that could be

any exercise of the liveliest fancy be made to assume equine proportions; a propensity to blacken his venerable white hair with ink and coal dust; and an omnivorous appetite, which did not stop at chalk, clay, or cinders, were peculiarities not calculated to excite respect. In fact, he would seem to have become demoralized, and when, after a prolonged absence the other day, he was finally discovered standing upon the front steps addressing a group of delighted children out of his limited vocabulary, the circumstance could only be accounted for as the garrulity of age.

But I lay aside my pen amidst an ominous silence and the disappearance of the venerable head from my plane of vision. As I step to the other side of the table, I find that sleep has overtaken him in an overt act of hoary wickedness. The very pages I have devoted to an exposition of his deceit he has quietly abstracted, and I find them covered with cabalistic figures and wild-looking hieroglyphs traced with his forefinger dipped in ink, which doubtless in his own language conveys a scathing commentary on my composition. But he sleeps peacefully, and there is something in his face which tells me that he has already wandered away to that dim region of his youth where I cannot follow him. And as there comes a strange stirring at my heart when I contemplate the immeasurable gulf which lies between us, and how slight and feeble as yet is his grasp on this world and its strange realities, I find, too late, that I also am a willing victim of the Venerable Impostor.

A BOYS' DOG

As I lift my eyes from the paper, I observe a dog lying on the steps of the opposite house. His attitude might induce passers-by and casual observers to believe him to belong to the people who live there, and to accord to him a certain standing and position. I have seen visitors pat him, under the impression that they were doing an act of courtesy to his master, he lending himself to the fraud by hypocritical contortions of the body. But his attitude is one of deceit and simulation. He has neither master nor habitation. He is a very pariah and outcast; in brief, "A Boys' Dog."

There is a degree of hopeless and irreclaimable vagabondage expressed in this epithet which may not be generally understood. Only those who are familiar with the roving nature and predatory instincts of boys in large cities will appreciate its strength. It is the lowest step in the social scale to which a respectable canine can descend. A blind man's dog, or the companion of a knife-grinder, is comparatively elevated. He at least owes allegiance to but one master. But the Boys' Dog is the thrall of an entire juvenile community, obedient to the beck and call of the smallest imp in the neighborhood, attached to and serving not the individual boy so much as the boy element and principle. In their active sports, in small thefts, raids into back yards, window-breaking, and other minor juvenile recreations, he is a full participant. In this way he is the reflection of the wickedness of many masters, without possessing the virtues or peculiarities of any particular one.

If leading a "dog's life" be considered a peculiar phase

of human misery, the life of a Boys' Dog is still more infelicitous. He is associated in all schemes of wrong-doing, and unless he be a dog of experience, is always the scapegoat. He never shares the booty of his associates. In absence of legitimate amusement he is considered fair game for his companions; and I have seen him reduced to the ignominy of having a tin kettle tied to his tail. His ears and tail have generally been docked to suit the caprice of the unholy band of which he is a member; and if he has any pluck, he is invariably pitted against larger dogs in mortal combat. He is poorly fed and hourly abused; the reputation of his associates debars him from outside sympathies; and once a Boys' Dog, he cannot change his condition. He is not unfrequently sold into slavery by his inhuman companions. I remember once to have been accosted on my own doorsteps by a couple of precocious youths, who offered to sell me a dog which they were then leading by a rope. The price was extremely moderate, being, if I remember rightly, but fifty cents. Imagining the unfortunate animal to have lately fallen into their wicked hands, and anxious to claim him from the degradation of becoming a Boys' Dog, I was about to conclude the bargain, when I saw a look of intelligence pass between the dog and his two masters. I promptly stopped all negotiation, and drove the youthful swindlers and their four-footed accomplice from my presence. The whole thing was perfectly plain. The dog was an old, experienced, and hardened Boys' Dog, and I was perfectly satisfied that he would run away and rejoin his old companions at the first opportunity. This I afterwards learned he did, on the occasion of a kind-hearted but unsophisticated neighbor buying him; and a few days ago I saw him exposed for sale by those two Arcadians in another neighborhood, having been bought and paid for half a dozen times in this.

But, it will be asked, if the life of a Boys' Dog is so un-

happy, why do they enter upon such an unenviable situation, and why do they not dissolve the partnership when it becomes unpleasant? I will confess that I have been often puzzled by this question. For some time I could not make up my mind whether their unholy alliance was the result of the influence of the dog on the boy or vice versa, and which was the weakest and most impressible nature. I am satisfied now that at first the dog is undoubtedly influenced by the boy, and, as it were, is led, while yet a puppy, from the paths of canine rectitude by artful and designing boys. As he grows older and more experienced in the ways of his Bohemian friends, he becomes a willing decoy, and takes delight in leading boyish innocence astray, in beguiling children to play truant, and thus revenges his own degradation on the boy nature generally. It is in this relation, and in regard to certain unhallowed practices I have detected him in, that I deem it proper to expose to parents and guardians the danger to which their offspring is exposed by the Boys' Dog.

The Boys' Dog lays his plans artfully. He begins to influence the youthful mind by suggestions of unrestrained freedom and frolic which he offers in his own person. He will lie in wait at the garden gate for a very small boy, and endeavor to lure him outside its sacred precincts by gambolling and jumping a little beyond the inclosure. He will set off on an imaginary chase and run around the block in a perfectly frantic manner, and then return, breathless, to his former position, with a look as of one who would say, "There! you see how perfectly easy it's done!" Should the unhappy infant find it difficult to resist the effect which this glimpse of the area of freedom produces, and step beyond the gate, from that moment he is utterly demoralized. The Boys' Dog owns him body and soul. Straightway he is led by the deceitful brute into the unhallowed circle of his *Bohemian* masters. Sometimes the unfortunate boy, if

he be very small, turns up eventually at the station-house as a lost child. Whenever I meet a stray boy in the street looking utterly bewildered and astonished, I generally find a Boys' Dog lurking on the corner. When I read the advertisements of lost children, I always add mentally to the description, "was last seen in company with a Boys' Dog." Nor is his influence wholly confined to small boys. I have seen him waiting patiently for larger boys on the way to school, and by artful and sophistical practices inducing them to play truant. I have seen him lying at the school-house door, with the intention of enticing the children on their way home to distant and remote localities. He has led many an unsuspecting boy to the wharves and quays by assuming the character of a water-dog, which he was not, and again has induced others to go with him on a gunning excursion by pretending to be a sporting dog, in which quality he was knowingly deficient. Unscrupulous, hypocritical, and deceitful, he has won many children's hearts by answering to any name they might call him, attaching himself to their persons until they got into trouble, and deserting them at the very moment they most needed his assistance. I have seen him rob small schoolboys of their dinners by pretending to knock them down by accident; and have seen larger boys in turn dispossess him of his ill-gotten booty for their own private gratification. From being a tool he has grown to be an accomplice; through much imposition, he has learned to impose on others; in his best character he is simply a vagabond's vagabond.

I could find it in my heart to pity him as he lies there through the long summer afternoon, enjoying brief intervals of tranquillity and rest, which he surreptitiously snatches from a stranger's doorstep. For a shrill whistle is heard in the streets, the boys are coming home from school, and he is startled from his dreams by a deftly thrown potato, which hits him on the head, and awakens him to the stern reality that he is now and forever — a Boys' Dog.

SURPRISING ADVENTURES OF MASTER CHARLES SUMMERTON

AT exactly half past nine o'clock on the morning of Saturday, August 26, 1865, Master Charles Summerton, aged five years, disappeared mysteriously from his paternal residence on Folsom Street, San Francisco. At twenty-five minutes past nine he had been observed by the butcher amusing himself by going through that popular youthful exercise known as "turning the crab," a feat in which he was singularly proficient. At a court of inquiry summarily held in the back parlor at 10.15, Bridget, cook, deposed to have detected him at twenty minutes past nine in the felonious abstraction of sugar from the pantry, which, by the same token, had she known what was a-comin', she 'd have never previnted. Patsey, a shrill-voiced youth from a neighboring alley, testified to have seen "Chowley" at half past nine in front of the butcher's shop round the corner; but as this young gentleman chose to throw out the gratuitous belief that the missing child had been converted into sausages by the butcher, his testimony was received with some caution by the female portion of the court, and with downright scorn and contumely by its masculine members. But whatever might have been the hour of his departure, it was certain that from half past nine A.M. until nine P.M., when he was brought home by a policeman, Charles Summerton was missing. Being naturally of a reticent disposition, he has since resisted, with but one exception, any attempt to wrest from him a statement of his *whereabouts* during that period. That exception has

been myself. He has related to me the following in the strictest confidence.

His intention on leaving the doorsteps of his dwelling was to proceed without delay to Van Diemen's Land, by way of Second and Market Streets. This project was subsequently modified so far as to permit a visit to Otaheite, where Captain Cook was killed. The outfit for his voyage consisted of two car-tickets, five cents in silver, a fishing-line, the brass capping of a spool of cotton, which in his eyes bore some resemblance to metallic currency, and a Sunday-school library ticket. His garments, admirably adapted to the exigencies of any climate, were severally a straw hat with a pink ribbon, a striped shirt, over which a pair of trousers, uncommonly wide in comparison to their length, were buttoned, striped balmoral stockings, which gave his youthful legs something of the appearance of wintergreen candy, and copper-toed shoes with iron heels, capable of striking fire from any flagstone. This latter quality, Master Charley could not help feeling, would be of infinite service to him in the wilds of Van Diemen's Land, which, as pictorially represented in his geography, seemed to be deficient in corner groceries and matches.

Exactly as the clock struck the half-hour, the short legs and straw hat of Master Charles Summerton disappeared around the corner. He ran rapidly, partly by way of inuring himself to the fatigues of the journey before him, and partly by way of testing his speed with that of a North Beach Car which was proceeding in his direction. The conductor, not being aware of this generous and lofty emulation, and being somewhat concerned at the spectacle of a pair of very short twinkling legs so far in the rear, stopped his car and generously assisted the youthful Summerton upon the platform. From this point a hiatus of several *hours' duration* occurs in Charles's narrative. He is under *the impression* that he "rode out" not only his two tickets,

but that he became subsequently indebted to the Company for several trips to and from the opposite termini, and that at last, resolutely refusing to give any explanation of his conduct, he was finally ejected, much to his relief, on a street corner. Although, as he informs us, he felt perfectly satisfied with this arrangement, he was impelled under the circumstances to hurl after the conductor an opprobrious appellation which he had ascertained from Patsey was the correct thing in such emergencies, and possessed peculiarly exasperating properties.

We now approach a thrilling part of the narrative, before which most of the adventures of the "Boys' Own Book" pale into insignificance. There are times when the recollection of this adventure causes Master Charles to break out in a cold sweat, and he has several times since its occurrence been awakened by lamentations and outcries in the night season by merely dreaming of it. On the corner of the street lay several large empty sugar hogsheads. A few young gentlemen disported themselves therein, armed with sticks, with which they removed the sugar which still adhered to the joints of the staves, and conveyed it to their mouths. Finding a cask not yet preëmpted, Master Charles set to work, and for a few moments reveled in a wild saccharine dream, whence he was finally roused by an angry voice and the rapidly retreating footsteps of his comrades. An ominous sound smote his ear, and the next moment he felt the cask wherein he lay uplifted and set upright against the wall. He was a prisoner, but as yet undiscovered. Being satisfied in his mind that hanging was the systematic and legalized penalty for the outrage he had committed, he kept down manfully the cry that rose to his lips.

In a few moments he felt the cask again lifted by a powerful hand, which appeared above him at the edge of his prison, and which he concluded belonged to the hero-

cious giant Blunderbore, whose features and limbs he had frequently met in colored pictures. Before he could recover from his astonishment, his cask was placed with several others on a cart, and rapidly driven away. The ride which ensued he describes as being fearful in the extreme. Rolled around like a pill in a box, the agonies which he suffered may be hinted at, not spoken. Evidences of that protracted struggle were visible in his garments, which were of the consistency of syrup, and his hair, which for several hours, under the treatment of hot water, yielded a thin treacle. At length the cart stopped on one of the wharves, and the cartman began to unload. As he tilted over the cask in which Charles lay, an exclamation broke from his lips, and the edge of the cask fell from his hands, sliding its late occupant upon the wharf. To regain his short legs, and to put the greatest possible distance between himself and the cartman, were his first movements on regaining his liberty. He did not stop until he reached the corner of Front Street.

Another blank succeeds in this veracious history. He cannot remember how or when he found himself in front of the circus tent. He has an indistinct recollection of having passed through a long street of stores which were all closed, and which made him fear that it was Sunday, and that he had spent a miserable night in the sugar cask. But he remembers hearing the sound of music within the tent, and of creeping on his hands and knees, when no one was looking, until he passed under the canvas. His description of the wonders contained within that circle; of the terrific feats which were performed by a man on a pole, since practiced by him in the back yard; of the horses, one of which was spotted and resembled an animal in his Noah's Ark, hitherto unrecognized and undefined; of the female equestrians, whose dresses could only be equaled in magnificence by the frocks of his sister's doll; of the painted clown,

whose jokes excited a merriment somewhat tinged by an undefined fear, was an effort of language which this pen could but weakly transcribe, and which no quantity of exclamation points could sufficiently illustrate. He is not quite certain what followed. He remembers that almost immediately on leaving the circus it became dark, and that he fell asleep, waking up at intervals on the corners of the streets, on front steps, in somebody's arms, and finally in his own bed. He was not aware of experiencing any regret for his conduct; he does not recall feeling at any time a disposition to go home; he remembers distinctly that he felt hungry.

He has made this disclosure in confidence. He wishes it to be respected. He wants to know if you have five cents about you.

THE MISSION DOLORES

THE Mission Dolores is destined to be "The Last Sigh" of the native Californian. When the last Greaser shall indolently give way to the bustling Yankee, I can imagine he will, like the Moorish king, ascend one of the mission hills to take his last lingering look at the hilled city. For a long time he will cling tenaciously to Pacific Street. He will delve in the rocky fastnesses of Telegraph Hill until progress shall remove it. He will haunt Vallejo Street, and those back slums which so vividly typify the degradation of a people; but he will eventually make way for improvement. The mission will be last to drop from his nerveless fingers.

As I stand here this pleasant afternoon, looking up at the old chapel, — its ragged senility contrasting with the smart spring sunshine, its two gouty pillars with the plaster dropping away like tattered bandages, its rayless windows, its crumbling entrances, the leper spots on its whitewashed wall eating through the dark adobe, — I give the poor old mendicant but a few years longer to sit by the highway and ask alms in the names of the blessed saints. Already the vicinity is haunted with the shadow of its dissolution. The shriek of the locomotive discords with the Angelus bell. An Episcopal church, of a green Gothic type, with massive buttresses of Oregon pine, even now mocks its hoary age with imitation and supplants it with a sham. Vain, alas! were those rural accessories, the nurseries and market-gardens, that once gathered about its walls and resisted *civic encroachment*. They, too, are passing away. Even

THE POOR OLD MENDICANT

those queer little adobe buildings with tiled roofs like longitudinal slips of cinnamon, and walled inclosures sacredly guarding a few bullock horns and strips of hide. I look in vain for the half-reclaimed Mexican, whose respectability stopped at his waist, and whose red sash under his vest was the utter undoing of his black broadcloth. I miss, too, those black-haired women, with swaying unstable busts, whose dresses were always unseasonable in texture and pattern; whose wearing of a shawl was a terrible awakening from the poetic dream of the Spanish mantilla. Traces of another nationality are visible. The railroad navvy has built his shanty near the chapel and smokes his pipe in the posada. Gutturals have taken the place of linguals and sibilants. I miss the half-chanted, half-drawled cadences that used to mingle with the cheery "All aboard" of the stage-driver, in those good old days when the stages ran hourly to the mission, and a trip thither was an excursion. At the very gates of the temple, in the place of those "who sell doves for sacrifice," a vender of mechanical spiders has halted with his unhallowed wares. Even the old padre — last type of the missionary, and descendant of the good Junipero — I cannot find to-day; in his stead a light-haired Celt is reading a lesson from a Vulgate that is wonderfully replete with double r's. Gentle priest, in thy R-isons, let the stranger and heretic be remembered.

I open a little gate and enter the mission churchyard. There is no change here, though perhaps the graves lie closer together. A willow-tree growing beside the deep brown wall has burst into tufted plumes in the fullness of spring. The tall grass blades over each mound show a strange quickening of the soil below. It is pleasanter here than on the bleak mountain seaward, where distracting winds continually bring the strife and turmoil of the ocean. The mission hills lovingly embrace the little cemetery, whose decorative taste is less ostentatious. The foreign *flavor is strong;* here are never-failing garlands of immor-

telles, with their sepulchral spicery; here are little cheap medallions of pewter, with the adornment of three black tears, that would look like the three of clubs, but that the simple humility of the inscription counterbalances all sense of the ridiculous. Here are children's graves with guardian angels of great specific gravity; but here, too, are the little one's toys in a glass case beside them. Here is the average quantity of execrable original verses; but one stanza — over a sailor's grave — is striking, for it expresses a hope of salvation through the "Lord High Admiral Christ." Over the foreign graves there is a notable lack of scriptural quotation, and an increase, if I may say it, of humanity and tenderness. I cannot help thinking that too many of my countrymen are influenced by a morbid desire to make a practical point of this occasion, and are too apt hastily to crowd a whole life of omission into the culminating act. But when I see the gray immortelles crowning a tombstone, I know I shall find the mysteries of the resurrection shown rather in symbols, and only the love taught in His new commandment left for the graphic touch. But "they manage these things better in France."

During my purposeless ramble the sun has been steadily climbing the brown wall of the church, and the air seems to grow cold and raw. The bright green dies out of the grass and the rich bronze comes down from the wall. The willow-tree seems half inclined to doff its plumes, and wears the dejected air of a broken faith and violated trust. The spice of the immortelles mixes with the incense that steals through the open window. Within, the barbaric gilt and crimson look cold and cheap in this searching air; by this light the church certainly is old and ugly. I cannot help wondering whether the old Fathers, if they ever revisit the scene of their former labors, in their larger comprehensions view with regret the impending change, or mourn over the *day when the* Mission Dolores shall appropriately come to *grief?*

BOONDER

I NEVER knew how the subject of this memoir came to attach himself so closely to the affections of my family. He was not a prepossessing dog. He was not a dog of even average birth and breeding. His pedigree was involved in the deepest obscurity. He may have had brothers and sisters, but in the whole range of my canine acquaintance (a pretty extensive one), I never detected any of Boonder's peculiarities in any other of his species. His body was long, and his fore legs and hind legs were very wide apart, as though Nature originally intended to put an extra pair between them, but had unwisely allowed herself to be persuaded out of it. This peculiarity was annoying on cold nights, as it always prolonged the interval of keeping the door open for Boonder's ingress long enough to allow two or three dogs of a reasonable length to enter. Boonder's feet were decided; his toes turned out considerably, and in repose his favorite attitude was the first position of dancing. Add to a pair of bright eyes ears that seemed to belong to some other dog, and a symmetrically pointed nose that fitted all apertures like a pass-key, and you have Boonder as we knew him.

I am inclined to think that his popularity was mainly owing to his quiet impudence. His advent in the family was that of an old member who had been absent for a short time, but had returned to familiar haunts and associations. In a Pythagorean point of view this might have been the case, but I cannot recall any deceased member of the family who was in life partial to bone-burying (though it might

be post mortem a consistent amusement), and this was Boonder's great weakness. He was at first discovered coiled up on a rug in an upper chamber, and was the least disconcerted of the entire household. From that moment Boonder became one of its recognized members, and privileges often denied the most intelligent and valuable of his species were quietly taken by him and submitted to by us. Thus, if he were found coiled up in a clothes-basket, or any article of clothing assumed locomotion on its own account, we only said, "Oh, it 's Boonder!" with a feeling of relief that it was nothing worse.

I have spoken of his fondness for bone-burying. It could not be called an economical faculty, for he invariably forgot the locality of his treasure, and covered the garden with purposeless holes; but although the violets and daisies were not improved by Boonder's gardening, no one ever thought of punishing him. He became a synonym for Fate; a Boonder to be grumbled at, to be accepted philosophically, — but never to be averted. But although he was not an intelligent dog, nor an ornamental dog, he possessed some gentlemanly instincts. When he performed his only feat, — begging upon his hind legs (and looking remarkably like a penguin), — ignorant strangers would offer him crackers or cake, which he did n't like, as a reward of merit. Boonder always made a great show of accepting the proffered dainties, and even made hypocritical contortions as if swallowing, but always deposited the morsel when he was unobserved in the first convenient receptacle, — usually the visitor's overshoes.

In matters that did not involve courtesy, Boonder was sincere in his likes and dislikes. He was instinctively opposed to the railroad. When the track was laid through our street, Boonder maintained a defiant attitude toward every rail as it went down, and resisted the cars shortly after to the fullest extent of his lungs. I have a vivid

recollection of seeing him, on the day of the trial trip, come down the street in front of the car, barking himself out of all shape, and thrown back several feet by the recoil of each bark. But Boonder was not the only one who has resisted innovations, or has lived to see the innovation prosper and even crush. But I am anticipating. Boonder had previously resisted the gas, but although he spent one whole day in angry altercation with the workmen, — leaving his bones unburied and bleaching in the sun, — somehow the gas went in. The Spring Valley water was likewise unsuccessfully opposed, and the grading of an adjoining lot was for a long time a personal matter between Boonder and the contractor.

These peculiarities seemed to evince some decided character and embody some idea. A prolonged debate in the family upon this topic resulted in an addition to his name, — we called him "Boonder the Conservative," with a faint acknowledgment of his fateful power. But, although Boonder had his own way, his path was not entirely of roses. Thorns sometimes pricked his sensibilities. When certain minor chords were struck on the piano, Boonder was always painfully affected and howled a remonstrance. If he were removed for company's sake to the back yard, at the recurrence of the provocation he would go his whole length (which was something) to improvise a howl that should reach the performer. But we got accustomed to Boonder, and as we were fond of music, the playing went on.

One morning Boonder left the house in good spirits with his regular bone in his mouth, and apparently the usual intention of burying it. The next day he was picked up lifeless on the track, — run over apparently by the first car that went out of the depot.

FROM A BALCONY

THE little stone balcony which, by a popular fallacy, is supposed to be a necessary appurtenance of my window, has long been to me a source of curious interest. The fact that the asperities of our summer weather will not permit me to use it but once or twice in six months does not alter my concern for this incongruous ornament. It affects me as I suppose the conscious possession of a linen coat or a pair of nankeen trousers might affect a sojourner here who has not entirely outgrown his memory of Eastern summer heat and its glorious compensations, — a luxurious providence against a possible but by no means probable contingency. I no longer wonder at the persistency with which San Franciscans adhere to this architectural superfluity in the face of climatical impossibilities. The balconies in which no one sits, the piazzas on which no one lounges, are timid advances made to a climate whose churlishness we are trying to temper by an ostentation of confidence. Ridiculous as this spectacle is at all seasons, it is never more so than in that bleak interval between sunset and dark, when the shrill scream of the factory whistle seems to have concentrated all the hard, unsympathetic quality of the climate into one vocal expression.

Add to this the appearance of one or two pedestrians, manifestly too late for their dinners, and tasting in the shrewish air a bitter premonition of the welcome that awaits them at home, and you have one of those ordinary *views from* my balcony which makes the balcony itself *ridiculous.*

But as I lean over its balustrade to-night — a night rare in its kindness and beauty — and watch the fiery ashes of my cigar drop into the abysmal darkness below, I am inclined to take back the whole of that preceding paragraph, although it cost me some labor to elaborate its polite malevolence. I can even recognize some melody in the music which comes irregularly and fitfully from the balcony of the museum on Market Street, although it may be broadly stated that, as a general thing, the music of all museums, menageries, and circuses becomes greatly demoralized, — possibly through associations with the beasts. So soft and courteous is this atmosphere that I have detected the flutter of one or two light dresses on the adjacent balconies and piazzas, and the front parlor windows of a certain aristocratic mansion in the vicinity, which have always maintained a studious reserve in regard to the interior, to-night are suddenly thrown into the attitude of familiar disclosure. A few young people are strolling up the street with a lounging step which is quite a relief to that usual brisk, business-like pace which the chilly nights impose upon even the most sentimental lovers. The genial influences of the air are not restricted to the opening of shutters and front doors; other and more gentle disclosures are made, no doubt, beneath this moonlight. The bonnet and hat which passed beneath my balcony a few moments ago were suspiciously close together. I argued from this that my friend the editor will probably receive any quantity of verses for his next issue, containing allusions to "Luna," in which the original epithet of "silver" will be applied to this planet, and that a "boon" will be asked for the evident purpose of rhyming with "moon," and for no other. Should neither of the parties be equal to this expression, the pent-up feelings of the heart will probably find vent later in the evening over the piano, in "I wandered by the Brookside," or "When the Moon *on the Lake is Beaming.*" But it has been permitted me to

hear the fulfilment of my prophecy even as it was uttered. From the window of number Twelve Hundred and Seven gushes upon the slumbrous misty air the maddening ballad "Ever of Thee," while at Twelve Hundred and Eleven the "Star of the Evening" rises with a chorus. I am inclined to think that there is something in the utter vacuity of the refrain in this song which especially commends itself to the young. The simple phrase "Star of the Evening" is again and again repeated with an imbecile relish; while the adjective "beautiful" recurs with a steady persistency too exasperating to dwell upon here. At occasional intervals a bass voice enunciates "Star-r! Star-r!" as a solitary and independent effort. Sitting here in my balcony, I picture the possessor of that voice as a small, stout young man, standing a little apart from the other singers, with his hands behind him under his coat-tail, and a severe expression of countenance. He sometimes leans forward, with a futile attempt to read the music over somebody else's shoulder, but always resumes his old severity of attitude before singing his part. Meanwhile the celestial subjects of this choral adoration look down upon the scene with a tranquillity and patience which can only result from the security with which their immeasurable remoteness invests them. I would remark that the stars are not the only topics subject to this "damnable iteration." A certain popular song, which contains the statement, "I will not forget you, mother," apparently reposes all its popularity on the constant and dreary repetition of this unimportant information, which at least produces the desired result among the audience. If the best operatic choruses are not above this weakness, the unfamiliar language in which they are sung offers less violation to common sense.

It may be parenthetically stated here that the songs *alluded to above* may be found in sheet music on the top *of the piano* of any young lady who has just come from

boarding-school. "The Old Arm-Chair," or "Woodman, Spare that Tree," will be also found in easy juxtaposition. The latter songs are usually brought into service at the instance of an uncle or bachelor brother, whose request is generally prefaced by a remark depreciatory of the opera, and the gratuitous observation that "we are retrograding, sir, — retrograding," and that "there is no music like the old songs." He sometimes condescends to accompany "Marie" in a tremulous barytone, and is particularly forcible in those passages where the word "repeat" is written, for reasons stated above. When the song is over, to the success of which he feels he has materially contributed, he will inform you that "you may talk of your 'arias' and your 'romanzas,' but for music, sir, — music —" at which point he becomes incoherent and unintelligible. It is this gentleman who suggests "China" or "Brattle Street" as a suitable and cheerful exercise for the social circle. There are certain amatory songs, of an arch and coquettish character, familiar to these localities, which the young lady, being called upon to sing, declines with a bashful and tantalizing hesitation. Prominent among these may be mentioned an erotic effusion entitled "I 'm Talking in my Sleep," which, when sung by a young person vivaciously and with appropriate glances, can be made to drive languishing swains to the verge of madness. Ballads of this quality afford splendid opportunities for bold young men, who, by ejaculating "Oh!" and "Ah!" at the affecting passages, frequently gain a fascinating reputation for wildness and skepticism.

But the music which called up these parenthetical reflections has died away, and with it the slight animosities it inspired. The last song has been sung, the piano closed, the lights are withdrawn from the windows, and the white skirts flutter away from stoops and balconies. The silence is broken only by the rattle and rumble of carriages com-

ing from theatre and opera. I fancy that this sound — which, seeming to be more distinct at this hour than at any other time, might be called one of the civic voices of the night — has certain urbane suggestions not unpleasant to those born and bred in large cities. The moon, round and full, gradually usurps the twinkling lights of the city, that one by one seem to fade away and be absorbed in her superior lustre. The distant Mission hills are outlined against the sky, but through one gap the outlying fog which has stealthily invested us seems to have effected a breach, and only waits the coöperation of the laggard sea-breezes to sweep down and take the beleaguered city by assault. An ineffable calm sinks over the landscape. In the magical moonlight the shot-tower loses its angular outline and practical relations, and becomes a minaret from whose balcony an invisible muezzin calls the faithful to prayer. "Prayer is better than sleep." But what is this? A shuffle of feet on the pavement, a low hum of voices, a twang of some diabolical instrument, a preliminary hem and cough. Heavens! it cannot be! Ah! yes, it is — it is — serenaders!

Anathema Maranatha! May purgatorial pains seize ye, William Count of Poitou, Girard de Boreuil, Arnaud de Marviel, Bertrand de Born, mischievous progenitors of jongleurs, troubadours, provençals, minnesingers, minstrels, and singers of cansos and love chants! Confusion overtake and confound your modern descendants, the "metre ballad-mongers," who carry the shamelessness of the middle ages into the nineteenth century, and awake a sleeping neighborhood to the brazen knowledge of their loves and wanton fancies! Destruction and demoralization pursue these pitiable imitators of a barbarous age, when ladies' names and charms were shouted through the land, and modest maiden *never lent* presence to tilt or tourney without hearing a *chronicle of her* virtues go round the lists, shouted by

wheezy heralds and taken up by roaring swashbucklers! Perdition overpower such ostentatious wooers! Marry! shall I shoot the amorous feline who nightly iterates his love-songs on my roof, and yet withhold my trigger-finger from yonder pranksome gallant? Go to! here is an orange left of last week's repast. Decay hath overtaken it, — it possesseth neither savor nor cleanliness. Ha! cleverly thrown! A hit — a palpable hit! Peradventure I have still a boot that hath done me service, and, barring a looseness of the heel, and ominous yawning at the side, 't is in good case! Na'theless, 't will serve. So! so! What! dispersed? Nay, then I too will retire!

JOHN CHINAMAN

THE expression of the Chinese face in the aggregate is neither cheerful nor happy. In an acquaintance of half a dozen years, I can only recall one or two exceptions to this rule. There is an abiding consciousness of degradation, a secret pain or self-humiliation, visible in the lines of the mouth and eye. Whether it is only a modification of Turkish gravity, or whether it is the dread Valley of the Shadow of the Drug through which they are continually straying, I cannot say. They seldom smile, and their laughter is of such an extraordinary and sardonic nature — so purely a mechanical spasm, quite independent of any mirthful attribute — that to this day I am doubtful whether I ever saw a Chinaman laugh. A theatrical representation by natives, one might think, would have set my mind at ease on this point; but it did not. Indeed, a new difficulty presented itself, — the impossibility of determining whether the performance was a tragedy or farce. I thought I detected the low comedian in an active youth who turned two somersaults and knocked everybody down on entering the stage. But, unfortunately, even this classic resemblance to the legitimate farce of our civilization was deceptive. Another brocaded actor, who represented the hero of the play, turned three somersaults, and not only upset my theory and his fellow actors at the same time, but apparently ran a-muck behind the scenes for some time afterward. I looked around at the glinting white teeth to observe the effect of *these two palpable* hits. They were received with equal *acclamation,* and apparently equal facial spasms. One or

two beheadings which enlivened the play produced the same sardonic effect, and left upon my mind a painful anxiety to know what was the serious business of life in China. It was noticeable, however, that my unrestrained laughter had a discordant effect, and that triangular eyes sometimes turned ominously toward the "Fanqui devil;" but as I retired discreetly before the play was finished, there were no serious results. I have only given the above as an instance of the impossibility of deciding upon the outward and superficial expression of Chinese mirth. Of its inner and deeper existence I have some private doubts. An audience that will view with a serious aspect the hero, after a frightful and agonizing death, get up and quietly walk off the stage, cannot be said to have remarkable perceptions of the ludicrous.

I have often been struck with the delicate pliability of the Chinese expression and taste, that might suggest a broader and deeper criticism than is becoming these pages. A Chinaman will adopt the American costume, and wear it with a taste of color and detail that will surpass those "native and to the manner born." To look at a Chinese slipper, one might imagine it impossible to shape the original foot to anything less cumbrous and roomy, yet a neater-fitting boot than that belonging to the Americanized Chinaman is rarely seen on this side of the continent. When the loose sack or paletot takes the place of his brocade blouse, it is worn with a refinement and grace that might bring a jealous pang to the exquisite of our more refined civilization. Pantaloons fall easily and naturally over legs that have known unlimited freedom and bagginess, and even garrote collars meet correctly around sun-tanned throats. The new expression seldom overflows in gaudy cravats. I will back my Americanized Chinaman against any neophyte of European birth in the choice of that article. While in our own State the Greaser resists

one by one the garments of the Northern invader, and even wears the livery of his conqueror with a wild and buttonless freedom, the Chinaman, abused and degraded as he is, changes by correctly graded transition to the garments of Christian civilization. There is but one article of European wear that he avoids. These Bohemian eyes have never yet been pained by the spectacle of a tall hat on the head of an intelligent Chinaman.

My acquaintance with John has been made up of weekly interviews, involving the adjustment of the washing accounts, so that I have not been able to study his character from a social view-point, or observe him in the privacy of the domestic circle. I have gathered enough to justify me in believing him to be generally honest, faithful, simple, and painstaking. Of his simplicity let me record an instance, where a sad and civil young Chinaman brought me certain shirts with most of the buttons missing, and others hanging on delusively by a single thread. In a moment of unguarded irony I informed him that unity would at least have been preserved if the buttons were removed altogether. He smiled sadly and went away. I thought I had hurt his feelings, until the next week, when he brought me my shirts with a look of intelligence, and the buttons carefully and totally erased. At another time, to guard against his general disposition to carry off anything as soiled clothes that he thought could hold water, I requested him to always wait until he saw me. Coming home late one evening, I found the household in great consternation over an immovable Celestial, who had remained seated on the front doorstep during the day sad and submissive, firm but also patient, and only betraying any animation or token of his mission when he saw me coming. This same Chinaman evinced some evidences of regard for a little girl in the family, who in her turn reposed such faith in his intellectual qualities as to present him with a preter-

naturally uninteresting Sunday-school book, her own property. This book John made a point of carrying ostentatiously with him in his weekly visits. It appeared usually on the top of the clean clothes, and was sometimes painfully clasped outside of the big bundle of soiled linen. Whether John believed he unconsciously imbibed some spiritual life through its pasteboard cover, as the prince in the Arabian Nights imbibed the medicine through the handle of the mallet, or whether he wished to exhibit a due sense of gratitude, or whether he had n't any pockets, I have never been able to ascertain. In his turn, he would sometimes cut marvelous imitation roses from carrots for his little friend. I am inclined to think that the few roses strewn in John's path were such scentless imitations. The thorns only were real. From the persecutions of the young and old of a certain class his life was a torment. I don't know what was the exact philosophy that Confucius taught, but it is to be hoped that poor John in his persecution is still able to detect the conscious hate and fear with which inferiority always regards the possibility of even-handed justice, and which is the keynote to the vulgar clamor about servile and degraded races.

ON A VULGAR LITTLE BOY

THE subject of this article is at present leaning against a tree directly opposite to my window. He wears his cap with the wrong side before, apparently for no other object than that which seems the most obvious, — of showing more than the average quantity of very dirty face. His clothes, which are worn with a certain buttonless ease and freedom, display in the different quality of their fruit-stains a pleasing indication of the progress of the seasons. The nose of this vulgar little boy turns up at the end. I have noticed this in several other vulgar little boys, although it is by no means improbable that youthful vulgarity may be present without this facial peculiarity. Indeed, I am inclined to the belief that it is rather the result of early inquisitiveness — of furtive pressures against window-panes, and of looking over fences, or of the habit of biting large apples hastily — than an indication of scorn or juvenile supercilious-ness. The Vulgar Little Boy is more remarkable for his obtrusive familiarity. It is my experience of his predisposition to this quality which has induced me to write this article.

My acquaintance with him began in a moment of weakness. I have an unfortunate predilection to cultivate originality in people, even when accompanied by objectionable character. But, as I lack the firmness and skillfulness which usually accompany this taste in others, and enable them to drop acquaintances when troublesome, I have surrounded *myself* with divers unprofitable friends, among *whom I count the* Vulgar Little Boy. The manner in which

he first attracted my attention was purely accidental. He was playing in the street, and the driver of a passing vehicle cut at him sportively with his whip. The Vulgar Little Boy rose to his feet and hurled after his tormentor a single sentence of invective. I refrain from repeating it, for I feel that I could not do justice to it here. If I remember rightly, it conveyed, in a very few words, a reflection on the legitimacy of the driver's birth; it hinted a suspicion of his father's integrity, and impugned the fair fame of his mother; it suggested incompetency in his present position, personal uncleanliness, and evinced a skeptical doubt of his future salvation. As his youthful lips closed over the last syllable, the eyes of the Vulgar Little Boy met mine. Something in my look emboldened him to wink. I did not repel the action nor the complicity it implied. From that moment I fell into the power of the Vulgar Little Boy, and he has never left me since.

He haunts me in the streets and byways. He accosts me, when in the company of friends, with repulsive freedom. He lingers about the gate of my dwelling to waylay me as I issue forth to business. Distance he overcomes by main strength of lungs, and he hails me from the next street. He met me at the theatre the other evening, and demanded my check with the air of a young footpad. I foolishly gave it to him, but reëntering some time after, and comfortably seating myself in the parquet, I was electrified by hearing my name called from the gallery with the addition of a playful adjective. It was the vulgar little boy. During the performance he projected spirally twisted playbills in my direction, and indulged in a running commentary on the supernumeraries as they entered.

To-day has evidently been a dull one with him. I observe he whistles the popular airs of the period with less shrillness and intensity. Providence, however, looks not unkindly on him, and delivers into his hands, as it were, two nice little

boys who have at this moment innocently strayed into our street. They are pink-and-white children, and are dressed alike, and exhibit a certain air of neatness and refinement which is alone sufficient to awaken the antagonism of the Vulgar Little Boy. A sigh of satisfaction breaks from his breast. What does he do? Any other boy would content himself with simply knocking the hats off their respective heads, and so vent his superfluous vitality in a single act, besides precipitating the flight of the enemy. But there are æsthetic considerations not to be overlooked; insult is to be added to the injury inflicted, and in the struggles of the victim some justification is to be sought for extreme measures. The two nice little boys perceive their danger and draw closer to each other. The Vulgar Little Boy begins by irony. He affects to be overpowered by the magnificence of their costume. He addresses me (across the street and through the closed window), and requests information if there haply be a circus in the vicinity. He makes affectionate inquiries after the health of their parents. He expresses a fear of maternal anxiety in regard to their welfare. He offers to conduct them home. One nice little boy feebly retorts; but alas! his correct pronunciation, his grammatical exactitude, and his moderate epithets only provoke a scream of derision from the Vulgar Little Boy, who now rapidly changes his tactics. Staggering under the weight of his vituperation, they fall easy victims to what he would call his "dexter mawley." A wail of lamentation goes up from our street. But as the subject of this article seems to require a more vigorous handling than I had purposed to give it, I find it necessary to abandon my present dignified position, seize my hat, open the front door, and try a stronger method.

FROM A BACK WINDOW

I REMEMBER that long ago, as a sanguine and trustful child, I became possessed of a highly colored lithograph representing a fair Circassian sitting by a window. The price I paid for this work of art may have been extravagant, even in youth's fluctuating slate-pencil currency; but the secret joy I felt in its possession knew no pecuniary equivalent. It was not alone that nature in Circassia lavished alike upon the cheek of beauty and the vegetable kingdom that most expensive of colors, — lake; nor was it that the rose which bloomed beside the fair Circassian's window had no visible stem, and was directly grafted upon a marble balcony; but it was because it embodied an idea. That idea was a hinting of my Fate. I felt that somewhere a young and fair Circassian was sitting by a window looking out for me. The idea of resisting such an array of charms and color never occurred to me, and to my honor be it recorded, that during the feverish period of adolescence I never thought of averting my destiny. But as vacation and holiday came and went, and as my picture at first grew blurred, and then faded quite away between the Eastern and Western continents in my atlas, so its charm seemed mysteriously to pass away. When I became convinced that few females, of Circassian or other origin, sat pensively resting their chins on their henna-tinged nails at their parlor windows, I turned my attention to back windows. Although the fair Circassian has not yet burst upon me with open shutters, some peculiarities not unworthy of note have fallen under my observation. This knowledge has not been

gained without sacrifice. I have made myself familiar with back windows and their prospects in the weak disguise of seeking lodgings, heedless of the suspicious glances of landladies and their evident reluctance to show them. I have caught cold by long exposure to draughts. I have become estranged from friends by unconsciously walking to their back windows during a visit when the weekly linen hung upon the line, or when Miss Fanny (ostensibly indisposed) actually assisted in the laundry, and Master Bobby, in scant attire, disported himself on the area railings. But I have thought of Galileo, and the invariable experience of all seekers and discoverers of truth has sustained me.

Show me the back windows of a man's dwelling, and I will tell you his character. The rear of a house only is sincere. The attitude of deception kept up at the front windows leaves the back area defenseless. The world enters at the front door, but nature comes out at the back passage. That glossy, well-brushed individual, who lets himself in with a latch-key at the front door at night, is a very different being from the slipshod wretch who growls of mornings for hot water at the door of the kitchen. The same with madame, whose contour of figure grows angular, whose face grows pallid, whose hair comes down, and who looks some ten years older through the sincere medium of a back window. No wonder that intimate friends fail to recognize each other in this dos à dos position. You may imagine yourself familiar with the silver doorplate and bow-windows of the mansion where dwells your Saccharissa; you may even fancy you recognize her graceful figure between the lace curtains of the upper chamber which you fondly imagine to be hers; but you shall dwell for months in the rear of her dwelling and within whispering distance of her bower, and never know it. You shall see her with a handkerchief tied round her head in confidential discussion with *the butcher, and* know her not. You shall hear her voice

in shrill expostulation with her younger brother, and it shall awaken no familiar response.

I am writing at a back window. As I prefer the warmth of my coal-fire to the foggy freshness of the afternoon breeze that rattles the leafless shrubs in the garden below me, I have my window-sash closed; consequently, I miss much of the shrilly altercation that has been going on in the kitchen of No. 7 just opposite. I have heard fragments of an entertaining style of dialogue usually known as "chaffing," which has just taken place between Biddy in No. 9 and the butcher who brings the dinner. I have been pitying the chilled aspect of the poor canary, put out to taste the fresh air, from the window of No. 5. I have been watching — and envying, I fear — the real enjoyment of two children raking over an old dust-heap in the alley containing the waste and débris of all the back yards in the neighborhood. What a wealth of soda-water bottles and old iron they have acquired! But I am waiting for an even more familiar prospect from my back window. I know that later in the afternoon, when the evening paper comes, a thickset, gray-haired man will appear in his shirt-sleeves at the back door of No. 9, and, seating himself on the doorstep, begin to read. He lives in a pretentious house, and I hear he is a rich man. But there is such humility in his attitude, and such evidence of gratitude at being allowed to sit outside of his own house and read his paper in his shirt-sleeves, that I can picture his domestic history pretty clearly. Perhaps he is following some old habit of humbler days. Perhaps he has entered into an agreement with his wife not to indulge his disgraceful habit indoors. He does not look like a man who could be coaxed into a dressing-gown. In front of his own palatial residence I know him to be a quiet and respectable middle-aged business-man, but it is from my back window that my heart warms toward him in his shirt-sleeved simplicity. So I sit and watch him in the twilight

as he reads gravely, and wonder sometimes, when he looks up, squares his chest, and folds his paper thoughtfully over his knee, whether he does n't fancy he hears the letting down of bars or the tinkling of bells as the cows come home and stand lowing for him at the gate.

SIDEWALKINGS

THE time occupied in walking to and from my business I have always found to yield me a certain mental enjoyment which no other part of the twenty-four hours could give. Perhaps the physical exercise may have acted as a gentle stimulant of the brain, but more probably the comfortable consciousness that I could not reasonably be expected to be doing anything else — to be studying or improving my mind, for instance — always gave a joyous liberty to my fancy. I once thought it necessary to employ this interval in doing sums in arithmetic, — in which useful study I was and am still lamentably deficient, — but after one or two attempts at peripatetic computation I gave it up. I am satisfied that much enjoyment is lost to the world by this nervous anxiety to improve our leisure moments, which, like the "shining hours" of Dr. Watts, unfortunately offer the greatest facilities for idle pleasure. I feel a profound pity for those misguided beings who are still impelled to carry text-books with them in cars, omnibuses, and ferryboats, and who generally manage to defraud themselves of those intervals of rest they most require. Nature must have her fallow moments, when she covers her exhausted fields with flowers instead of grain. Deny her this, and the next crop suffers for it. I offer this axiom as some apology for obtruding upon the reader a few of the speculations which have engaged my mind during these daily perambulations.

Few Californians know how to lounge gracefully. Business habits, and a deference to the custom, even with those who have no business, give an air of restless anxiety to

every pedestrian. The exceptions to this rule are apt to go to the other extreme, and wear a defiant, obtrusive kind of indolence which suggests quite as much inward disquiet and unrest. The shiftless lassitude of a gambler can never be mistaken for the lounge of a gentleman. Even the brokers who loiter upon Montgomery Street at high noon are not loungers. Look at them closely and you will see a feverishness and anxiety under the mask of listlessness. They do not lounge — they lie in wait. No surer sign, I imagine, of our peculiar civilization can be found than this lack of repose in its constituent elements. You cannot keep Californians quiet even in their amusements. They dodge in and out of the theatre, opera, and lecture-room; they prefer the street cars to walking because they think they get along faster. The difference of locomotion between Broadway, New York, and Montgomery Street, San Francisco, is a comparative view of Eastern and Western civilization.

There is a habit peculiar to many walkers which "Punch," some years ago, touched upon satirically, but which seems to have survived the jester's ridicule. It is that custom of stopping friends in the street to whom we have nothing whatever to communicate, but whom we embarrass for no other purpose than simply to show our friendship. Jones meets his friend Smith, whom he has met in nearly the same locality but a few hours before. During that interval it is highly probable that no event of any importance to Smith, nor indeed to Jones, which by a friendly construction Jones could imagine Smith to be interested in, has occurred, or is likely to occur. Yet both gentlemen stop and shake hands earnestly. "Well, how goes it?" remarks Smith, with a vague hope that something may have happened. "So so," replies the eloquent Jones, feeling intuitively the deep vacuity of his friend answering to his own. *A pause ensues,* in which both gentlemen regard each other

with an imbecile smile and a fervent pressure of the hand. Smith draws a long breath and looks up the street; Jones sighs heavily and gazes down the street. Another pause, in which both gentlemen disengage their respective hands and glance anxiously around for some conventional avenue of escape. Finally Smith (with a sudden assumption of having forgotten an important engagement) ejaculates, "Well, I must be off," — a remark instantly echoed by the voluble Jones, and these gentlemen separate, only to repeat their miserable formula the next day. In the above example I have compassionately shortened the usual leave-taking, which, in skillful hands, may be protracted to a length which I shudder to recall. I have sometimes, when an active participant in these atrocious transactions, lingered in the hope of saying something natural to my friend (feeling that he, too, was groping in the mazy labyrinths of his mind for a like expression), until I have felt that we ought to have been separated by a policeman. It is astonishing how far the most wretched joke will go in these emergencies, and how it will, as it were, convulsively detach the two cohering particles. I have laughed (albeit hysterically) at some witticism under cover of which I escaped, that five minutes afterward I could not perceive possessed a grain of humor. I would advise any person who may fall into this pitiable strait that, next to getting in the way of a passing dray and being forcibly disconnected, a joke is the most efficacious. A foreign phrase often may be tried with success. I have sometimes known Au revoir, pronounced "O-reveer," to have the effect (as it ought) of severing friends.

But this is a harmless habit compared to a certain reprehensible practice in which sundry feeble-minded young men indulge. I have been stopped in the street and enthusiastically accosted by some fashionable young man, who has engaged me in animated conversation, until (quite

accidentally) a certain young belle would pass, whom my friend of course saluted. As, by a strange coincidence, this occurred several times in the course of the week, and as my young friend's conversational powers invariably flagged after the lady had passed, I am forced to believe that the deceitful young wretch actually used me as a conventional background to display the graces of his figure to the passing fair. When I detected the trick, of course I made a point of keeping my friend, by strategic movements, with his back toward the young lady, while I bowed to her myself. Since then I understand that it is a regular custom of these callow youths to encounter each other, with simulated cordiality, some paces in front of the young lady they wish to recognize, so that she cannot possibly cut them. The corner of California and Montgomery streets is their favorite haunt. They may be easily detected by their furtive expression of eye, which betrays them even in the height of their apparent enthusiasm.

Speaking of eyes, you can generally settle the average gentility and good breeding of the people you meet in the street by the manner in which they return or evade your glance. "A gentleman," as the Autocrat has wisely said, is always "calm-eyed." There is just enough abstraction in his look to denote his individual power and the capacity for self-contemplation, while he is, nevertheless, quietly and unobtrusively observant. He does not seek, neither does he evade, your observation. Snobs and prigs do the first; bashful and mean people do the second. There are some men who, on meeting your eye, immediately assume an expression quite different from the one which they previously wore, which, whether an improvement or not, suggests a disagreeable self-consciousness. Perhaps they fancy they are betraying something. There are others who *return your* look with unnecessary defiance, which suggests a *like concealment*. The symptoms of the eye are generally

borne out in the figure. A man is very apt to betray his character by the manner in which he appropriates his part of the sidewalk. The man who resolutely keeps the middle of the pavement and deliberately brushes against you, you may be certain would take the last piece of pie at the hotel table, and empty the cream-jug on its way to your cup. The man who sidles by you, keeping close to the houses and selecting the easiest planks, manages to slip through life in some such way, and to evade its sternest duties. The awkward man, who gets in your way, and throws you back upon the man behind you, and so manages to derange the harmonious procession of an entire block, is very apt to do the same thing in political and social economy. The inquisitive man, who deliberately shortens his pace so that he may participate in the confidence you impart to your companion, has an eye not unfamiliar to keyholes, and probably opens his wife's letters. The loud man, who talks with the intention of being overheard, is the same egotist elsewhere. If there was any justice in Iago's sneer, that there were some "so weak of soul that in their sleep they mutter their affairs," what shall be said of the walking reverie babblers? I have met men who were evidently rolling over, "like a sweet morsel under the tongue," some speech they were about to make, and others who were framing curses. I remember once that, while walking behind an apparently respectable old gentleman, he suddenly uttered the exclamation, "Well, I 'm d—d!" and then quietly resumed his usual manner. Whether he had at that moment become impressed with a truly orthodox disbelief in his ultimate salvation, or whether he was simply indignant, I never could tell.

I have been hesitating for some time to speak — or if indeed to speak at all — of that lovely and critic-defying sex whose bright eyes and voluble prattle have not been without effect in tempering the austerities of my peripatetic

musing. I have been humbly thankful that I have been permitted to view their bright dresses and those charming bonnets which seem to have brought the birds and flowers of spring within the dreary limits of the town, and — I trust I shall not be deemed unkind in saying it — my pleasure was not lessened by the reflection that the display, to me at least, was inexpensive. I have walked in — and I fear occasionally on — the train of the loveliest of her sex who has preceded me. If I have sometimes wondered why two young ladies always began to talk vivaciously on the approach of any good-looking fellow; if I have wondered whether the mirror-like qualities of all large show-windows at all influenced their curiosity regarding silks and calicoes; if I have ever entertained the same ungentlemanly thought concerning daguerreotype show-cases; if I have ever misinterpreted the eyeshot which has passed between two pretty women — more searching, exhaustive, and sincere than any of our feeble ogles, — if I have ever committed these or any other impertinences, it was only to retire beaten and discomfited, and to confess that masculine philosophy, while it soars beyond Sirius and the rings of Saturn, stops short at the steel periphery which encompasses the simplest schoolgirl.

CHARITABLE REMINISCENCES

As the new Benevolent Association has had the effect of withdrawing beggars from the streets, and as professional mendicancy bids fair to be presently ranked with the lost arts, to preserve some records of this noble branch of industry, I have endeavored to recall certain traits and peculiarities of individual members of the order whom I have known, and whose forms I now miss from their accustomed haunts. In so doing, I confess to feeling a certain regret at this decay of professional begging, for I hold the theory that mankind are bettered by the occasional spectacle of misery, whether simulated or not, on the same principle that our sympathies are enlarged by the fictitious woes of the drama, though we know that the actors are insincere. Perhaps I am indiscreet in saying that I have rewarded the artfully dressed and well-acted performance of the begging impostor through the same impulse that impelled me to expend a dollar in witnessing the counterfeited sorrows of poor "Triplet," as represented by Charles Wheatleigh. I did not quarrel with deceit in either case. My coin was given in recognition of the sentiment; the moral responsibility rested with the performer.

The principal figure that I now mourn over as lost forever is one that may have been familiar to many of my readers. It was that of a dark-complexioned, black-eyed, foreign-looking woman, who supported in her arms a sickly baby. As a pathological phenomenon the baby was especially interesting, having presented the Hippocratic face and other symptoms of immediate dissolution without change

for the past three years. The woman never verbally solicited alms. Her appearance was always mute, mysterious, and sudden. She made no other appeal than that which the dramatic tableau of herself and baby suggested, with an outstretched hand and deprecating eye sometimes superadded. She usually stood in my doorway, silent and patient, intimating her presence, if my attention was preoccupied, by a slight cough from her baby, who I shall always believe had its part to play in this little pantomime, and generally obeyed a secret signal from the maternal hand. It was useless for me to refuse alms, to plead business, or affect inattention. She never moved; her position was always taken with an appearance of latent capabilities of endurance and experience in waiting which never failed to impress me with awe and the futility of any hope of escape. There was also something in the reproachful expression of her eye which plainly said to me, as I bent over my paper, "Go on with your mock sentimentalities and simulated pathos, portray the imaginary sufferings of your bodiless creations, spread your thin web of philosophy; but look you, sir, here is real misery — here is genuine suffering!" I confess that this artful suggestion usually brought me down. In three minutes after she had thus invested the citadel I usually surrendered at discretion, without a gun having been fired on either side. She received my offering and retired as mutely and mysteriously as she had appeared. Perhaps it was well for me that she did not know her strength. I might have been forced, had this terrible woman been conscious of her real power, to have borrowed money which I could not pay, or have forged a check to purchase immunity from her awful presence. I hardly know if I make myself understood, and yet I am unable to define my meaning more clearly when I say that *there was* something in her glance which suggested to the *person appealed to,* when in the presence of others, a certain

idea of some individual responsibility for her sufferings, which, while it never failed to affect him with a mingled sense of ludicrousness and terror, always made an impression of unqualified gravity on the minds of the by-standers. As she has disappeared within the last month, I imagine that she has found a home at the San Francisco Benevolent Association, — at least, I cannot conceive of any charity, however guarded by wholesome checks or sharp-eyed almoners, that could resist that mute apparition. I should like to go there and inquire about her, and also learn if the baby was convalescent or dead; but I am satisfied that she would rise up, a mute and reproachful appeal, so personal in its artful suggestions, that it would end in the association instantly transferring her to my hands.

My next familiar mendicant was a vender of printed ballads. These effusions were so stale, atrocious, and unsaleable in their character, that it was easy to detect that hypocrisy which — in imitation of more ambitious beggary — veiled the real eleemosynary appeal under the thin pretext of offering an equivalent. This beggar — an aged female in a rusty bonnet — I unconsciously precipitated upon myself in an evil moment. On our first meeting, while distractedly turning over the ballads, I came upon a certain production entitled, I think, "The Fire Zouave," and was struck with the truly patriotic and American manner in which "Zouave" was made to rhyme in different stanzas with "grave, brave, save, and glaive." As I purchased it at once with a gratified expression of countenance, it soon became evident that the act was misconstrued by my poor friend, who from that moment never ceased to haunt me. Perhaps in the whole course of her precarious existence she had never before sold a ballad. My solitary purchase evidently made me, in her eyes, a customer, and in a measure exalted her vocation; so thereafter she regularly used to look in at my door, with a chirping, confident air,

and the question "Any more songs to-day?" as though it were some necessary article of daily consumption. I never took any more of her songs, although that circumstance did not shake her faith in my literary taste; my abstinence from this exciting mental pabulum being probably ascribed to charitable motives. She was finally absorbed by the S. F. B. A., who have probably made a proper disposition of her effects. She was a little old woman, of Celtic origin, predisposed to melancholy, and looking as if she had read most of her ballads.

My next reminiscence takes the shape of a very seedy individual, who had, for three or four years, been vainly attempting to get back to his relatives in Illinois, where sympathizing friends and a comfortable almshouse awaited him. Only a few dollars, he informed me, — the uncontributed remainder of the amount necessary to purchase a steerage ticket, — stood in his way. These last few dollars seem to have been most difficult to get, and he had wandered about, a sort of antithetical Flying Dutchman, forever putting to sea, yet never getting away from shore. He was a "49-er," and had recently been blown up in a tunnel, or had fallen down a shaft, I forget which. This sad accident obliged him to use large quantities of whiskey as a liniment, which, he informed me, occasioned the mild fragrance which his garments exhaled. Though belonging to the same class, he was not to be confounded with the unfortunate miner who could not get back to his claim without pecuniary assistance, or the desolate Italian who hopelessly handed you a document in a foreign language, very much bethumbed and illegible, which, in your ignorance of the tongue, you could n't help suspiciously feeling might have been a price current, but which you could see was proffered as an excuse for alms. Indeed, whenever any stranger handed me, without speaking, an open document, which bore the marks of having been carried in the

greasy lining of a hat, I always felt safe in giving him a quarter and dismissing him without further questioning. I always noticed that these circular letters, when written in the vernacular, were remarkable for their beautiful caligraphy and grammatical inaccuracy, and that they all seem to have been written by the same hand. Perhaps indigence exercises a peculiar and equal effect upon the handwriting.

I recall a few occasional mendicants whose faces were less familiar. One afternoon a most extraordinary Irishman, with a black eye, a bruised hat, and other traces of past enjoyment, waited upon me with a pitiful story of destitution and want, and concluded by requesting the usual trifle. I replied, with some severity, that if I gave him a dime he would probably spend it for drink. "Be Gorra! but you're roight — I wad that!" he answered promptly. I was so much taken aback by this unexpected exhibition of frankness that I instantly handed over the dime. It seems that truth had survived the wreck of his other virtues; he did get drunk, and, impelled by a like conscientious sense of duty, exhibited himself to me in that state a few hours after, to show that my bounty had not been misapplied.

In spite of the peculiar characters of these reminiscences, I cannot help feeling a certain regret at the decay of professional mendicancy. Perhaps it may be owing to a lingering trace of that youthful superstition which saw in all beggars a possible prince or fairy, and invested their calling with a mysterious awe. Perhaps it may be from a belief that there is something in the old-fashioned alms-givings and actual contact with misery that is wholesome for both donor and recipient, and that any system which interposes a third party between them is only putting on a thick glove, which, while it preserves us from contagion, absorbs and deadens the kindly pressure of our hand. It is a very

pleasant thing to purchase relief from the annoyance and trouble of having to weigh the claims of an afflicted neighbor. As I turn over these printed tickets, which the courtesy of the San Francisco Benevolent Association has — by a slight stretch of the imagination in supposing that any sane unfortunate might rashly seek relief from a newspaper office — conveyed to these editorial hands, I cannot help wondering whether, when in our last extremity we come to draw upon the Immeasurable Bounty, it will be necessary to present a ticket.

"SEEING THE STEAMER OFF"

I HAVE sometimes thought, while watching the departure of an Eastern steamer, that the act of parting from friends — so generally one of bitterness and despondency — is made by an ingenious Californian custom to yield a pleasurable excitement. This luxury of leave-taking, in which most Californians indulge, is often protracted to the hauling in of the gang-plank. Those last words, injunctions, promises, and embraces, which are mournful and depressing perhaps in that privacy demanded on other occasions, are here, by reason of their very publicity, of an edifying and exhilarating character. A parting kiss, blown from the deck of a steamer into a miscellaneous crowd, of course loses much of that sacred solemnity with which foolish superstition is apt to invest it. A broadside of endearing epithets, even when properly aimed and apparently raking the whole wharf, is apt to be impotent and harmless. A husband who prefers to embrace his wife for the last time at the door of her stateroom, and finds himself the centre of an admiring group of unconcerned spectators, of course feels himself lifted above any feeling save that of ludicrousness which the situation suggests. The mother parting from her offspring should become a Roman matron under the like influences; the lover who takes leave of his sweetheart is not apt to mar the general hilarity by any emotional folly. In fact, this system of delaying our parting sentiments until the last moment — this removal of domestic scenery and incident to a public theatre — may be said to be worthy of a stoical and democratic people, and is an

event in our lives which may be shared with the humblest coal-passer or itinerant vender of oranges. It is a return to that classic out-of-door experience and mingling of public and domestic economy which so ennobled the straight-nosed Athenian.

So universal is this desire to be present at the departure of any steamer that, aside from the regular crowd of loungers who make their appearance confessedly only to look on, there are others who take advantage of the slightest intimacy to go through the leave-taking formula. People whom you have quite forgotten, people to whom you have been lately introduced, suddenly and unexpectedly make their appearance and wring your hands with fervor. The friend long estranged forgives you nobly at the last moment to take advantage of this glorious opportunity of "seeing you off." Your bootmaker, tailor, and hatter — haply with no ulterior motives and unaccompanied by official friends — visit you with enthusiasm. You find great difficulty in detaching your relatives and acquaintances from the trunks on which they resolutely seat themselves up to the moment when the paddles are moving, and you are haunted continually by an ill-defined idea that they may be carried off and foisted on you — with the payment of their passage, which, under the circumstances, you could not refuse — for the rest of the voyage. Your friends will make their appearance at the most inopportune moments and from the most unexpected places, — dangling from hawsers, climbing up paddle-boxes, and crawling through cabin windows at the imminent peril of their lives. You are nervous and crushed by this added weight of responsibility. Should you be a stranger, you will find any number of people on board who will cheerfully and at a venture take leave of you on the slightest advances made on your part. A friend of mine assures me that he once parted, *with great enthusiasm* and cordiality, from a party of gen-

tlemen, to him personally unknown, who had apparently mistaken his stateroom. This party, — evidently connected with some fire company, — on comparing notes on the wharf, being somewhat dissatisfied with the result of their performances, afterward rendered my friend's position on the hurricane deck one of extreme peril and inconvenience, by reason of skillfully projected oranges and apples, accompanied with some invective. Yet there is certainly something to interest us in the examination of that cheerless damp closet, whose painted wooden walls no furniture or company can make habitable, wherein our friend is to spend so many vapid days and restless nights. The sight of these apartments, yclept *staterooms*, — Heaven knows why, except it be from their want of coziness — is full of keen reminiscences to most Californians who have not outgrown the memories of that dreary interval when, in obedience to Nature's wise compensations, homesickness was blotted out by seasickness, and both at last resolved into a chaotic and distempered dream, whose details we now recognize. The steamer chair that we used to drag out upon the narrow strip of deck and doze in over the pages of a well-thumbed novel; the deck itself, of afternoons redolent with the skins of oranges and bananas, of mornings damp with salt water and mopping; the netted bulwark, smelling of tar in the tropics and fretted on the weather side with little saline crystals; the villainously compounded odors of victuals from the pantry and oil from the machinery; the young lady that we used to flirt with, and with whom we shared our last novel, adorned with marginal annotations; our own chum; our own bore; the man who was never seasick; the two events of the day, breakfast and dinner, and the dreary interval between; the tremendous importance given to trifling events and trifling people; the young lady who kept a journal; the newspaper, published on board, filled with mild pleasantries and impertinences, elsewhere

unendurable; the young lady who sang; the wealthy passenger; the popular passenger; the —

[Let us sit down for a moment until this qualmishness, which these associations and some infectious quality of the atmosphere seem to produce, has passed away. What becomes of our steamer friends? Why are we now so apathetic about them? Why is it that we drift away from them so unconcernedly, forgetting even their names and faces? Why, when we do remember them, do we look at them so suspiciously, with an undefined idea that, in the unrestrained freedom of the voyage, they became possessed of some confidence and knowledge of our weaknesses that we never should have imparted? Did we make any such confessions? Perish the thought! The popular man, however, is not now so popular. We have heard finer voices than that of the young lady who sang so sweetly. Our chum's fascinating qualities somehow have deteriorated on land; so have those of the fair young novel reader, now the wife of an honest miner in Virginia City.]

— the passenger who made so many trips, and exhibited a reckless familiarity with the officers; the officers themselves, now so modest and undemonstrative, a few hours later so all-powerful and important, — these are among the reminiscences of most Californians, and these are to be remembered among the experiences of our friend. Yet he feels, as we all do, that his past experience will be of profit to him, and has already the confident air of an old voyager.

As you stand on the wharf again, and listen to the cries of itinerant fruit venders, you wonder why it is that grief at parting and the unpleasant novelties of travel are supposed to be assuaged by oranges and apples, even at ruinously low prices. Perhaps it may be, figuratively, the last offering of *the fruitful earth*, as the passenger commits himself to the *bosom of the ste*rile and unproductive ocean. Even while

the wheels are moving and the lines are cast off some hardy apple merchant, mounted on the top of a pile, concludes a trade with a steerage passenger, — twenty feet interposing between buyer and seller, — and achieves, under these difficulties, the delivery of his wares. Handkerchiefs wave, hurried orders mingle with parting blessings, and the steamer is "off." As you turn your face cityward, and glance hurriedly around at the retreating crowd, you will see a reflection of your own wistful face in theirs, and read the solution of one of the problems which perplex the California enthusiast. Before you lies San Francisco, with her hard, angular outlines, her brisk, invigorating breezes, her bright but unsympathetic sunshine, her restless and energetic population; behind you fades the recollection of changeful but honest skies, of extremes of heat and cold, modified and made enjoyable through social and physical laws, of pastoral landscapes, of accessible nature in her kindliest forms, of inherited virtues, of long-tested customs and habits, of old friends and old faces, — in a word, — of HOME!

NEIGHBORHOODS I HAVE MOVED FROM

I

A BAY-WINDOW once settled the choice of my house and compensated for many of its inconveniences. When the chimney smoked, or the doors alternately shrunk and swelled, resisting any forcible attempt to open them, or opening of themselves with ghostly deliberation, or when suspicious blotches appeared on the ceiling in rainy weather, there was always the bay-window to turn to for comfort. And the view was a fine one. Alcatraz, Lime Point, Fort Point, and Saucelito were plainly visible over a restless expanse of water that changed continually, glittering in the sunlight, darkening in rocky shadow, or sweeping in mimic waves on a miniature beach below.

Although at first the bay-window was supposed to be sacred to myself and my writing materials, in obedience to some organic law it by and by became a general lounging-place. A rocking-chair and crotchet basket one day found their way there. Then the baby invaded its recesses, fortifying himself behind intrenchments of colored worsteds and spools of cotton, from which he was only dislodged by concerted assault, and carried lamenting into captivity. A subtle glamour crept over all who came within its influence. To apply one's self to serious work there was an absurdity. An incoming ship, a gleam on the water, a cloud lingering about Tamalpais, were enough to distract the attention. Reading or writing, the bay-window was always showing *something* to be looked at. Unfortunately these views were *not always* pleasant, but the window gave equal prominence [illegible]portance to all, without respect to quality.

The landscape in the vicinity was unimproved but not rural. The adjacent lots had apparently just given up bearing scrub-oaks, but had not seriously taken to bricks and mortar. In one direction the vista was closed by the Home of the Inebriates, not in itself a cheerful-looking building, and, as the apparent terminus of a ramble in a certain direction, having all the effect of a moral lesson. To a certain extent, however, this building was an imposition. The enthusiastic members of my family, who confidently expected to see its inmates hilariously disporting themselves at its windows in the different stages of inebriation portrayed by the late W. E. Burton, were much disappointed. The Home was reticent of its secrets. The County Hospital, also in range of the bay-window, showed much more animation. At certain hours of the day convalescents passed in review before the window on their way to an airing. This spectacle was the still more depressing from a singular lack of sociability that appeared to prevail among them. Each man was encompassed by the impenetrable atmosphere of his own peculiar suffering. They did not talk or walk together. From the window I have seen half a dozen sunning themselves against a wall within a few feet of each other, to all appearance utterly oblivious of the fact. Had they but quarreled or fought, — anything would have been better than this horrible apathy.

The lower end of the street on which the bay-window was situate opened invitingly from a popular thoroughfare, and after beckoning the unwary stranger into its recesses, ended unexpectedly at a frightful precipice. On Sundays, when the travel North-beachwards was considerable, the bay-window delighted in the spectacle afforded by unhappy pedestrians who were seduced into taking this street as a short-cut somewhere else. It was amusing to notice how these people invariably, on coming to the precipice, glanced upward to the bay-window and endeavored to assume a

careless air before they retraced their steps, whistling ostentatiously, as if they had previously known all about it. One high-spirited young man in particular, being incited thereto by a pair of mischievous bright eyes in an opposite window, actually descended this fearful precipice rather than return, to the great peril of life and limb, and manifest injury to his Sunday clothes.

Dogs, goats, and horses constituted the fauna of our neighborhood. Possessing the lawless freedom of their normal condition, they still evinced a tender attachment to man and his habitations. Spirited steeds got up extempore races on the sidewalks, turning the street into a miniature Corso; dogs wrangled in the areas; while from the hill beside the house a goat browsed peacefully upon my wife's geraniums in the flower-pots in the second-story window. "We had a fine hailstorm last night," remarked a newly arrived neighbor, who had just moved into the adjoining house. It would have been a pity to set him right, as he was quite enthusiastic about the view and the general sanitary qualifications of the locality. So I did n't tell him anything about the goats who were in the habit of using his house as a stepping-stone to the adjoining hill.

But the locality was remarkably healthy. People who fell down the embankments found their wounds heal rapidly in the steady sea-breeze. Ventilation was complete and thorough. The opening of the bay-window produced a current of wholesome air which effectually removed all noxious exhalations, together with the curtains, the hinges of the back door, and the window-shutters. Owing to this peculiarity, some of my writings acquired an extensive circulation and publicity in the neighborhood, which years in another locality might not have produced. The mysterious trans*position* of several articles of wearing apparel from our *clothes-line* to that of an humble though honest neighbor *was* undoubtedly the result of these sanitary winds. Yet in

spite of these advantages I found it convenient in a few months to move. And the result thereof I shall communicate in other papers.

II

"A house with a fine garden and extensive shrubbery, in a genteel neighborhood," were, if I remember rightly, the general terms of an advertisement which once decided my choice of a dwelling. I should add that this occurred at an early stage of my household experience, when I placed a trustful reliance in advertisements. I have since learned that the most truthful people are apt to indulge a slight vein of exaggeration in describing their own possessions, as though the mere circumstance of going into print were an excuse for a certain kind of mendacity. But I did not fully awaken to this fact until a much later period, when, in answering an advertisement which described a highly advantageous tenement, I was referred to the house I then occupied, and from which a thousand inconveniences were impelling me to move.

The "fine garden" alluded to was not large, but contained several peculiarly shaped flower-beds. I was at first struck with the singular resemblance which they bore to the mutton chops that are usually brought on the table at hotels and restaurants, — a resemblance the more striking from the sprigs of parsley which they produced freely. One plat in particular reminded me, not unpleasantly, of a peculiar cake known to my boyhood as "a bolivar." The owner of the property, however, who seemed to be a man of original æsthetic ideas, had banked up one of these beds with bright-colored seashells, so that in rainy weather it suggested an aquarium, and offered the elements of botanical and conchological study in pleasing juxtaposition. I have since thought that the fish-geraniums, which it also bore to

a surprising extent, were introduced originally from some such idea of consistency. But it was very pleasant after dinner to ramble up and down the gravelly paths (whose occasional boulders reminded me of the dry bed of a somewhat circuitous mining stream), smoking a cigar, or inhaling the rich aroma of fennel, or occasionally stopping to pluck one of the hollyhocks with which the garden abounded. The prolific qualities of this plant alarmed us greatly, for although, in the first transport of enthusiasm, my wife planted several different kinds of flower-seeds, nothing ever came up but hollyhocks; and although, impelled by the same laudable impulse, I procured a copy of "Downing's Landscape Gardening" and a few gardening tools, and worked for several hours in the garden, my efforts were equally futile.

"The extensive shrubbery" consisted of several dwarfed trees. One was a very weak young weeping willow, so very limp and maudlin, and so evidently bent on establishing its reputation, that it had to be tied up against the house for support. The dampness of that portion of the house was usually attributed to the presence of this lachrymose shrub. Add to these a couple of highly objectionable trees, known, I think, by the name of Malva, which made an inordinate show of cheap blossoms that they were continually shedding, and one or two dwarf oaks with scaly leaves and a generally spiteful exterior, and you have what was not inaptly termed by our Milesian handmaid "the scrubbery."

The gentility of our neighborhood suffered a blight from the unwholesome vicinity of McGinnis's Court. This court was a kind of cul de sac, that, on being penetrated, discovered a primitive people living in a state of barbarous freedom, and apparently spending the greater portion of their lives on their own doorsteps. Many of those details of the toilet which a popular prejudice restricts to the dressing-room in other localities were here performed in

the open court without fear and without reproach. Early in the week the court was hid in a choking, soapy mist, which arose from innumerable wash-tubs. This was followed a day or two later by an extraordinary exhibition of wearing apparel of divers colors, fluttering on lines like a display of bunting on shipboard, and whose flapping in the breeze was like irregular discharges of musketry. It was evident also that the court exercised a demoralizing influence over the whole neighborhood. A sanguine property owner once put up a handsome dwelling on the corner of our street and lived therein; but although he appeared frequently on his balcony, clad in a bright crimson dressing-gown, which made him look like a tropical bird of some rare and gorgeous species, he failed to woo any kindred dressing-gown to the vicinity, and only provoked opprobrious epithets from the gamins of the court. He moved away shortly after, and on going by the house one day, I noticed a bill of "Rooms to let, with board," posted conspicuously on the Corinthian columns of the porch. McGinnis's Court had triumphed. An interchange of civilities at once took place between the court and the servants' area of the palatial mansion, and some of the young men boarders exchanged playful slang with the adolescent members of the court. From that moment we felt that our claims to gentility were forever abandoned.

Yet we enjoyed intervals of unalloyed contentment. When the twilight toned down the hard outlines of the oaks and made shadowy clumps and formless masses of other bushes, it was quite romantic to sit by the window and inhale the faint, sad odor of the fennel in the walks below. Perhaps this economical pleasure was much enhanced by a picture in my memory whose faded colors the odor of this humble plant never failed to restore. So I often sat there of evenings and closed my eyes until the forms and benches of a country schoolroom came back to

me, redolent with the incense of fennel covertly stowed away in my desk, and gazed again in silent rapture on the round red cheeks and long black braids of that peerless creature whose glance had often caused my cheeks to glow over the preternatural collar which at that period of my boyhood it was my pride and privilege to wear. As I fear I may be often thought hypocritical and censorious in these articles, I am willing to record this as one of the advantages of our new house, not mentioned in the advertisement nor chargeable in the rent. May the present tenant, who is a stockbroker, and who impresses me with the idea of having always been called "Mr." from his cradle up, enjoy this advantage, and try sometimes to remember he was a boy!

III

Soon after I moved into Happy Valley I was struck with the remarkable infelicity of its title. Generous as Californians are in the use of adjectives, this passed into the domain of irony. But I was inclined to think it sincere, — the production of a weak but gushing mind, just as the feminine nomenclature of streets in the vicinity was evidently bestowed by one in habitual communion with "Friendship's Gifts" and "Affection's Offerings."

Our house on Laura Matilda Street looked somewhat like a toy Swiss cottage, — a style of architecture so prevalent, that in walking down the block it was quite difficult to resist an impression of fresh glue and pine shavings. The few shade-trees might have belonged originally to those oval Christmas boxes which contain toy villages; and even the people who sat by the windows had a stiffness that made them appear surprisingly unreal and artificial. A little dog belonging to a neighbor was known to the members of my household by the name of "Glass," from the general sug-

gestion he gave of having been spun of that article. Perhaps I have somewhat exaggerated these illustrations of the dapper nicety of our neighborhood, — a neatness and conciseness which I think have a general tendency to belittle, dwarf, and contract their objects. For we gradually fell into small ways and narrow ideas, and to some extent squared the round world outside to the correct angles of Laura Matilda Street.

One reason for this insincere quality may have been the fact that the very foundations of our neighborhood were artificial. Laura Matilda Street was "made ground." The land, not yet quite reclaimed, was continually struggling with its old enemy. We had not been long in our new home before we found an old tenant, not yet wholly divested of his rights, who sometimes showed himself in clammy perspiration on the basement walls, whose damp breath chilled our dining-room, and in the night struck a mortal chilliness through the house. There were no patent fastenings that could keep him out, no writ of unlawful detainer that could eject him. In the winter his presence was quite palpable; he sapped the roots of the trees, he gurgled under the kitchen floor, he wrought an unwholesome greenness on the side of the veranda. In summer he became invisible, but still exercised a familiar influence over the locality. He planted little stitches in the small of the back, sought out old aches and weak joints, and sportively punched the tenants of the Swiss cottage under the ribs. He inveigled little children to play with him, but his plays generally ended in scarlet-fever, diphtheria, whooping-cough, and measles. He sometimes followed strong men about, until they sickened suddenly and took to their beds. But he kept the green plants in good order, and was very fond of verdure, bestowing it even upon lath and plaster and soulless stone. He was generally invisible, as I have said; but some time after I had moved I saw him one morning from the

hill stretching his gray wings over the valley, like some fabulous vampire, who had spent the night sucking the wholesome juices of the sleepers below, and was sluggish from the effects of his repast. It was then that I recognized him as Malaria, and knew his abode to be the dread Valley of the Shadow of Miasma, — miscalled the Happy Valley.

On week-days there was a pleasant melody of boiler-making from the foundries, and the gasworks in the vicinity sometimes lent a mild perfume to the breeze. Our street was usually quiet, however, — a footfall being sufficient to draw the inhabitants to their front windows, and to oblige an incautious trespasser to run the gauntlet of batteries of blue and black eyes on either side of the way. A carriage passing through it communicated a singular thrill to the floors, and caused the china on the dining-table to rattle. Although we were comparatively free from the prevailing winds, wandering gusts sometimes got bewildered and strayed unconsciously into our street, and finding an unencumbered field, incontinently set up a shriek of joy, and went gleefully to work on the clothes-lines and chimney-pots, and had a good time generally until they were quite exhausted. I have a very vivid picture in my memory of an organ-grinder who was at one time blown into the end of our street, and actually blown through it in spite of several ineffectual efforts to come to a stand before the different dwellings, but who was finally whirled out of the other extremity, still playing and vainly endeavoring to pursue his unhallowed calling. But these were noteworthy exceptions to the calm and even tenor of our life.

There was contiguity but not much sociability in our neighborhood. From my bedroom window I could plainly distinguish the peculiar kind of victuals spread on my neighbor's dining-table; while, on the other hand, he obtained *an equally* uninterrupted view of the mysteries of my toilet. *Still that* "low vice, curiosity," was regulated by certain

laws, and a kind of rude chivalry invested our observation. A pretty girl, whose bedroom window was the cynosure of neighboring eyes, was once brought under the focus of an opera-glass in the hands of one of our ingenious youth; but this act met such prompt and universal condemnation, as an unmanly advantage, from the lips of married men and bachelors who did n't own opera-glasses, that it was never repeated.

With this brief sketch I conclude my record of the neighborhoods I have moved from. I have moved from many others since then, but they have generally presented features not dissimilar to the three I have endeavored to describe in these pages. I offer them as types containing the salient peculiarities of all. Let no inconsiderate reader rashly move on account of them. My experience has not been cheaply bought. From the nettle Change I have tried to pluck the flower Security. Draymen have grown rich at my expense. House-agents have known me and were glad, and landlords have risen up to meet me from afar. The force of habit impels me still to consult all the bills I see in the streets, nor can the war telegrams divert my first attention from the advertising columns of the daily papers. I repeat, let no man think I have disclosed the weaknesses of the neighborhood, nor rashly open that closet which contains the secret skeleton of his dwelling. My carpets have been altered to fit all-sized odd-shaped apartments from parallelopiped to hexagons. Much of my furniture has been distributed among my former dwellings. These limbs have stretched upon uncarpeted floors or have been let down suddenly from imperfectly established bedsteads. I have dined in the parlor and slept in the back kitchen. Yet the result of these sacrifices and trials may be briefly summed up in the statement that I am now on the eve of removal from my PRESENT NEIGHBORHOOD.

MY SUBURBAN RESIDENCE

I LIVE in the suburbs. My residence, to quote the pleasing fiction of the advertisement, "is within fifteen minutes' walk from the city hall." Why the city hall should be considered as an eligible terminus of anybody's walk under any circumstances, I have not been able to determine. Never having walked from my residence to that place, I am unable to verify the assertion, though I may state as a purely abstract and separate proposition, that it takes me the better part of an hour to reach Montgomery Street.

My selection of locality was a compromise between my wife's desire to go into the country and my own predilections for civic habitation. Like most compromises, it ended in retaining the objectionable features of both propositions; I procured the inconveniences of the country without losing the discomforts of the city. I increased my distance from the butcher and greengrocer without approximating to herds and kitchen-gardens. But I anticipate.

Fresh air was to be the principal thing sought for. That there might be too much of this did not enter into my calculations. The first day I entered my residence, it blew; the second day was windy; the third, fresh, with a strong breeze stirring; on the fourth, it blew; on the fifth, there was a gale, which has continued to the present writing.

That the air is fresh the above statement sufficiently establishes. That it is bracing I argue from the fact that I find it impossible to open the shutters on the windward side of the house. That it is healthy I am also convinced,

believing that there is no other force in nature that could so buffet and ill-use a person without serious injury to him. Let me offer an instance. The path to my door crosses a slight eminence. The unconscious visitor, a little exhausted by the ascent and the general effects of the gentle gales which he has faced in approaching my hospitable mansion, relaxes his efforts, smooths his brow, and approaches with a fascinating smile. Rash and too confident man! The wind delivers a succession of rapid blows, and he is thrown back. He staggers up again, in the language of the P. R., "smiling and confident." The wind now makes for a vulnerable point, and gets his hat in chancery. All ceremony is now thrown away; the luckless wretch seizes his hat with both hands and charges madly at the front door. Inch by inch the wind contests the ground; another struggle, and he stands upon the veranda. On such occasions I make it a point to open the door myself, with a calmness and serenity that shall offer a marked contrast to his feverish and excited air, and shall throw suspicion of inebriety upon him. If he be inclined to timidity and bashfulness, during the rest of the evening he is all too conscious of the disarrangement of his hair and cravat. If he is less sensitive, the result is often more distressing. A valued elderly friend once called upon me after undergoing a twofold struggle with the wind and a large Newfoundland dog (which I keep for reasons hereinafter stated), and not only his hat, but his wig had suffered. He spent the evening with me, totally unconscious of the fact that his hair presented the singular spectacle of having been parted diagonally from the right temple to the left ear. When ladies called, my wife preferred to receive them. They were generally hysterical, and often in tears. I remember, one Sunday, to have been startled by what appeared to be the balloon from Hayes Valley drifting rapidly past my conservatory, closely followed by the Newfoundland dog. I rushed to the front door, but was anti-

cipated by my wife. A strange lady appeared at lunch, but the phenomenon remained otherwise unaccounted for. Egress from my residence is much more easy. My guests seldom "stand upon the order of their going, but go at once," the Newfoundland dog playfully harassing their rear. I was standing one day, with my hand on the open hall door, in serious conversation with the minister of the parish, when the back door was cautiously opened. The watchful breeze seized the opportunity, and charged through the defenseless passage. The front door closed violently in the middle of a sentence, precipitating the reverend gentleman into the garden. The Newfoundland dog, with that sagacity for which his race is so distinguished, at once concluded that a personal collision had taken place between myself and visitor, and flew to my defense. The reverend gentleman never called again.

The Newfoundland dog above alluded to was part of a system of protection which my suburban home once required. Robberies were frequent in the neighborhood, and my only fowl fell a victim to the spoiler's art. One night I awoke and found a man in my room. With singular delicacy and respect for the feelings of others, he had been careful not to awaken any of the sleepers, and retired upon my rising without waiting for any suggestion. Touched by his delicacy, I forbore giving the alarm until after he had made good his retreat. I then wanted to go after a policeman, but my wife remonstrated, as this would leave the house exposed. Remembering the gentlemanly conduct of the burglar, I suggested the plan of following him and requesting him to give the alarm as he went in town. But this proposition was received with equal disfavor. The next day I procured a dog and a revolver. The former went off, but the latter would n't. I then got a new dog and chained him, and a dueling pistol with a *hair-trigger*. The result was so far satisfactory that neither

could be approached with safety, and for some time I left them out indifferently during the night. But the chain one day gave way, and the dog, evidently having no other attachment to the house, took the opportunity to leave. His place was soon filled by the Newfoundland, whose fidelity and sagacity I have just recorded.

Space is one of the desirable features of my suburban residence. I do not know the number of acres the grounds contain except from the inordinate quantity of hose required for irrigating. I perform daily, like some gentle shepherd, upon a quarter-inch pipe without any visible result, and have had serious thoughts of contracting with some disbanded fire company for their hose and equipments. It is quite a walk to the wood-house. Every day some new feature of the grounds is discovered. My youngest boy was one day missing for several hours. His head — a peculiarly venerable and striking object — was at last discovered just above the grass at some distance from the house. On examination, he was found comfortably seated in a disused drain, in company with a silver spoon and a dead rat. On being removed from this locality he howled dismally and refused to be comforted.

The view from my suburban residence is fine. Lone Mountain, with its white obelisks, is a suggestive if not cheering termination of the vista in one direction, while the old receiving-vault of Yerba Buena Cemetery limits the view in another. Most of the funerals which take place pass my house. My children, with the charming imitativeness that belongs to youth, have caught the spirit of these passing cortéges, and reproduce in the back yard, with credible skill, the salient features of the lugubrious procession. A doll, from whose features all traces of vitality and expression have been removed, represents the deceased. Yet unfortunately I have been obliged to promise them more active *participation* in the ceremony at some future time.

and I fear that they look anxiously forward with the glowing impatience of youth to the speedy removal of some one of my circle of friends. I am told that the eldest, with the unsophisticated frankness that belongs to his age, made a personal request to that effect to one of my acquaintances. One singular result of the frequency of these funerals is the development of a critical and fastidious taste in such matters on the part of myself and family. If I may so express myself without irreverence, we seldom turn out for anything less then six carriages. Any number over this is usually breathlessly announced by Bridget as, "Here's another, mum, — and a good long one."

With these slight drawbacks my suburban residence is charming. To the serious poet and writer of elegiac verses, the aspect of nature, viewed from my veranda, is suggestive. I myself have experienced moments when the "sad mechanic exercise" of verse would have been of infinite relief. The following stanzas, by a young friend who has been stopping with me for the benefit of his health, addressed to a duck that frequented a small pond in the vicinity of my mansion, may be worthy of perusal. I think I have met the idea conveyed in the first verse in some of Hood's prose, but as my friend assures me that Hood was too conscientious to appropriate anything not his own, I conclude I am mistaken.

LINES TO A WATER-FOWL

(*Intra Muros*)

I

Fowl, that sing'st in yonder pool,
Where the summer winds blow cool,
Are there hydropathic cures
For the ills that man endures ?
Know'st thou Priessnitz ? What ? alack !
Hast no other word but "Quack" ?

II

Cleopatra's barge might pale
To the splendors of thy tail,
Or the stately caravel
Of some "high-pooped admiral."
Never yet left such a wake
E'en the navigator Drake!

III

Dux thou art, and leader, too,
Heeding not what 's "falling due;"
Knowing not of debt or dun, —
Thou dost heed no bill but one;
And, though scarce conceivable,
That 's a bill receivable,
Made — that thou thy stars mightst thank
Payable at the next bank.

THE RUINS OF SAN FRANCISCO

TOWARDS the close of the nineteenth century the city of San Francisco was totally engulfed by an earthquake. Although the whole coast-line must have been much shaken, the accident seems to have been purely local, and even the city of Oakland escaped. Schwappelfurt, the celebrated German geologist, has endeavored to explain this singular fact by suggesting that there are some things the earth cannot swallow, — a statement that should be received with some caution, as exceeding the latitude of ordinary geological speculation.

Historians disagree in the exact date of the calamity. Tulu Krish, the well-known New Zealander, whose admirable speculations on the ruins of St. Paul's as seen from London Bridge have won for him the attentive consideration of the scientific world, fixes the occurrence in A. D. 1880. This, supposing the city to have been actually founded in 1850, as asserted, would give but thirty years for it to have assumed the size and proportions it had evidently attained at the time of its destruction. It is not our purpose, however, to question the conclusions of the justly famed Maorian philosopher. Our present business lies with the excavations that are now being prosecuted by order of the Hawaiian government upon the site of the lost city. Every one is familiar with the story of its discovery. For many years the Bay of San Francisco had been famed for the luscious quality of its oysters. It is *stated that* a dredger one day raked up a large bell, which *proved to belong* to the city hall, and led to the discovery

of the cupola of that building. The attention of the government was at once directed to the spot. The Bay of San Francisco was speedily drained by a system of patent siphons, and the city, deeply embedded in mud, brought to light after a burial of many centuries. The city hall, post-office, mint, and custom-house were readily recognized by the large full-fed barnacles which adhered to their walls. Shortly afterwards the first skeleton was discovered, that of a broker, whose position in the upper strata of mud, nearer the surface, was supposed to be owing to the exceeding buoyancy or inflation of scrip which he had secured about his person while endeavoring to escape. Many skeletons, supposed to be those of females, encompassed in that peculiar steel coop or cage which seems to have been worn by the women of that period, were also found in the upper stratum. Alexis von Puffer, in his admirable work on San Francisco, accounts for the position of these unfortunate creatures by asserting that the steel cage was originally the frame of a parachute-like garment which distended the skirt, and in the submersion of the city prevented them from sinking. "If anything," says Von Puffer, "could have been wanting to add intensity to the horrible catastrophe which took place as the waters first entered the city, it would have been furnished in the forcible separation of the sexes at this trying moment. Buoyed up by their peculiar garments, the female population instantly ascended to the surface. As the drowning husband turned his eyes above, what must have been his agony as he saw his wife shooting upward, and knew that he was debarred the privilege of perishing with her? To the lasting honor of the male inhabitants be it said that but few seem to have availed themselves of their wives' superior levity. Only one skeleton was found still grasping the ankles of another in their upward journey to the surface."

For many years California had been subject to slight

earthquakes, more or less generally felt, but not of sufficient importance to awaken anxiety or fear. Perhaps the absorbing nature of the San Franciscans' pursuit of gold-getting, which metal seems to have been valuable in those days, and actually used as a medium of currency, rendered the inhabitants reckless of all other matters. Everything tends to show that the calamity was totally unlooked for. We quote the graphic language of Schwappelfurt: —

"The morning of the tremendous catastrophe probably dawned upon the usual restless crowd of gold-getters intent upon their several avocations. The streets were filled with the expanded figures of gayly dressed women, acknowledging with coy glances the respectful salutations of beaux as they gracefully raised their remarkable cylindrical head-coverings, a model of which is still preserved in the Honolulu Museum. The brokers had gathered at their respective temples. The shopmen were exhibiting their goods. The idlers, or 'Bummers,' — a term applied to designate an aristocratic privileged class, who enjoyed immunities from labor, and from whom a majority of the rulers were chosen, — were listlessly regarding the promenaders from the street-corners or the doors of their bibulous temple. A slight premonitory thrill runs through the city. The busy life of this restless microcosm is arrested. The shopkeeper pauses as he elevates the goods to bring them into a favorable light, and the glib professional recommendation sticks on his tongue. In the drinking-saloon the glass is checked halfway to the lips; on the streets the promenaders pause. Another thrill, and the city begins to go down, a few of the more persistent topers turning off their liquor at the same moment. Beyond a terrible sensation of nausea, the crowds who now throng the streets do not realize the extent of the catastrophe. The waters of the bay recede at *first from* the centre of depression, assuming a concave *shape, the* outer edge of the circle towering many thousand

feet above the city. Another convulsion, and the water instantly resumes its level. The city is smoothly engulfed nine thousand feet below, and the regular swell of the Pacific calmly rolls over it. Terrible," says Schwappelfurt, in conclusion, "as the calamity must have been in direct relation to the individuals immediately concerned therein, we cannot but admire its artistic management, the division of the catastrophe into three periods, the completeness of the cataclysms, and the rare combination of sincerity of intention with felicity of execution."

STORIES OF AND FOR THE YOUNG

THE QUEEN OF THE PIRATE ISLE

I FIRST knew her as the Queen of the Pirate Isle. To the best of my recollection she had no reasonable right to that title. She was only nine years old, inclined to plumpness and good humor, deprecated violence, and had never been to sea. Need it be added that she did *not* live in an island and that her name was Polly?

Perhaps I ought to explain that she had already known other experiences of a purely imaginative character. Part of her existence had been passed as a Beggar Child, — solely indicated by a shawl tightly folded round her shoulders, and chills; as a Schoolmistress, unnecessarily severe; as a Preacher, singularly personal in his remarks, and once, after reading one of Cooper's novels, as an Indian Maiden. This was, I believe, the only instance when she had borrowed from another's fiction. Most of the characters that she assumed for days and sometimes weeks at a time were purely original in conception; some so much so as to be vague to the general understanding. I remember that her personation of a certain Mrs. Smith, whose individuality was supposed to be sufficiently represented by a sunbonnet worn wrong side before and a weekly addition to her family, was never perfectly appreciated by her own circle although she lived the character for a month. Another creation known as "The Proud Lady" — a being whose excessive *and* unreasonable haughtiness was so pro-

nounced as to give her features the expression of extreme nausea — caused her mother so much alarm that it had to be abandoned. This was easily effected. The Proud Lady was understood to have died. Indeed, most of Polly's impersonations were got rid of in this way, although it by no means prevented their subsequent reappearance. "I thought Mrs. Smith was dead," remonstrated her mother at the posthumous appearance of that lady with a new infant. "She was buried alive and kem to!" said Polly with a melancholy air. Fortunately, the representation of a resuscitated person required such extraordinary acting, and was, through some uncertainty of conception, so closely allied in facial expression to the Proud Lady, that Mrs. Smith was resuscitated only for a day.

The origin of the title of the Queen of the Pirate Isle may be briefly stated as follows: —

An hour after luncheon, one day, Polly, Hickory Hunt, her cousin, and Wan Lee, a Chinese page, were crossing the nursery floor in a Chinese junk. The sea was calm and the sky cloudless. Any change in the weather was as unexpected as it is in books. Suddenly a West Indian Hurricane, purely local in character and unfelt anywhere else, struck Master Hickory and threw him overboard, whence, wildly swimming for his life and carrying Polly on his back, he eventually reached a Desert Island in the closet. Here the rescued party put up a tent made of a table-cloth providentially snatched from the raging billows, and, from two o'clock until four, passed six weeks on the island, supported only by a piece of candle, a box of matches, and two peppermint lozenges. It was at this time that it became necessary to account for Polly's existence among them, and this was only effected by an alarming sacrifice of their morality: Hickory and Wan Lee instantly became *Pirates*, and at *once elected* Polly as their Queen. The royal duties, which *seemed to* be purely maternal, consisted in putting the

Pirates to bed after a day of rapine and bloodshed, and in feeding them with licorice water through a quill in a small bottle. Limited as her functions were, Polly performed them with inimitable gravity and unquestioned sincerity. Even when her companions sometimes hesitated from actual hunger or fatigue and forgot their guilty part, she never faltered. It was her real existence; her other life of being washed, dressed, and put to bed at certain hours by her mother was the *illusion*.

Doubt and skepticism came at last, — and came from Wan Lee! Wan Lee of all creatures! Wan Lee, whose silent, stolid, mechanical performance of a pirate's duties — a perfect imitation like all his household work — had been their one delight and fascination!

It was just after the exciting capture of a merchantman, with the indiscriminate slaughter of all on board, — a spectacle on which the round blue eyes of the plump Polly had gazed with royal and maternal tolerance, — and they were burying the booty, two tablespoons and a thimble, in the corner of the closet, when Wan Lee stolidly rose.

"Melican boy pleenty foolee! Melican boy no Pilat!" said the little Chinaman, substituting "l's" for "r's" after his usual fashion.

"Wotcher say?" said Hickory, reddening with sudden confusion.

"Melican boy's papa heap lickee him — s'pose him leal Pilat," continued Wan Lee doggedly. "Melican boy Pilat *inside* housee; Chinee boy Pilat *outside* housee. First chop Pilat."

Staggered by this humiliating statement, Hickory recovered himself in character. "Ah! Ho!" he shrieked, dancing wildly on one leg, "Mutiny and Splordinashun! 'Way with him to the yard-arm."

"Yald-alm — heap foolee! Allee same clothes-horse for washee washee."

It was here necessary for the Pirate Queen to assert her authority, which, as I have before stated, was somewhat confusingly maternal.

"Go to bed instantly without your supper," she said seriously. "Really, I never saw such bad pirates. Say your prayers, and see that you 're up early to church to-morrow."

It should be explained that in deference to Polly's proficiency as a preacher, and probably as a relief to their uneasy consciences, Divine Service had always been held on the Island. But Wan Lee continued: —

"Me no shabbee Pilat *inside* housee; me shabbee Pilat *outside* housee. S'pose you lun away longside Chinee boy — Chinee boy makee you Pilat."

Hickory softly scratched his leg, while a broad, bashful smile almost closed his small eyes. "Wot?" he asked.

"Mebbee you too frightened to lun away. Melican boy's papa heap lickee."

This last infamous suggestion fired the corsair's blood. "Dy'ar think we daresen't?" said Hickory desperately, but with an uneasy glance at Polly. "I 'll show yer to-morrow."

The entrance of Polly's mother at this moment put an end to Polly's authority and dispersed the pirate band, but left Wan Lee's proposal and Hickory's rash acceptance ringing in the ears of the Pirate Queen. That evening she was unusually silent. She would have taken Bridget, her nurse, into her confidence, but this would have involved a long explanation of her own feelings, from which, like all imaginative children, she shrank. She, however, made preparation for the proposed flight by settling in her mind which of her two dolls she would take. A wooden creature with easy-going knees and movable hair seemed to be more fit for hard service and any indiscriminate scalping that might turn up hereafter. At supper, she timidly asked a question of Bridget. "Did ye ever hear the

loikes uv that, ma'am," said the Irish handmaid with affectionate pride. "Shure the darlint's head is filled noight and day with ancient history. She 's after asking me now if Queens ever run away!" To Polly's remorseful confusion here her good father, equally proud of her precocious interest and his own knowledge, at once interfered with an unintelligible account of the abdication of various queens in history until Polly's head ached again. Well meant as it was, it only settled in the child's mind that she must keep the awful secret to herself and that no one could understand her.

The eventful day dawned without any unusual sign of importance. It was one of the cloudless summer days of the Californian foothills, bright, dry, and as the morning advanced, hot in the white sunshine. The actual, prosaic house in which the Pirates apparently lived was a mile from a mining settlement on a beautiful ridge of pine woods sloping gently towards a valley on the one side, and on the other falling abruptly into a dark deep olive gulf of pine-trees, rocks, and patches of red soil. Beautiful as the slope was, looking over to the distant snow peaks which seemed to be in another world than theirs, the children found a greater attraction in the fascinating depths of a mysterious gulf, or cañon, as it was called, whose very name filled their ears with a weird music. To creep to the edge of the cliff, to sit upon the brown branches of some fallen pine, and, putting aside the dried tassels, to look down upon the backs of wheeling hawks that seemed to hang in mid-air was a never-failing delight. Here Polly would try to trace the winding red ribbon of road that was continually losing itself among the dense pines of the opposite mountains; here she would listen to the far-off strokes of a woodman's axe, or the rattle of some heavy wagon, miles away, crossing the pebbles of a dried up watercourse. Here, too, the prevailing colors of the moun-

tains, red and white and green, most showed themselves. There were no frowning rocks to depress the children's fancy, but everywhere along the ridge pure white quartz bared itself through the red earth like smiling teeth; the very pebbles they played with were streaked with shining mica like bits of looking-glass. The distance was always green and summer-like, but the color they most loved, and which was most familiar to them, was the dark red of the ground beneath their feet everywhere. It showed itself in the roadside bushes; its red dust pervaded the leaves of the overhanging laurel; it colored their shoes and pinafores; I am afraid it was often seen in Indian-like patches on their faces and hands. That it may have often given a sanguinary tone to their fancies I have every reason to believe.

It was on this ridge that the three children gathered at ten o'clock that morning. An earlier flight had been impossible on account of Wan Lee being obliged to perform his regular duty of blacking the shoes of Polly and Hickory before breakfast, — a menial act which in the pure republic of childhood was never thought inconsistent with the loftiest piratical ambition. On the ridge they met one "Patsey," the son of a neighbor, sun-burned, broad-brimmed hatted, red-handed, like themselves. As there were afterwards some doubts expressed whether he joined the Pirates of his own free will, or was captured by them, I endeavor to give the colloquy exactly as it occurred: —

Patsey: "Hallo, fellers."

The Pirates: "Hello!"

Patsey: "Goin' to hunt bars? Dad seed a lot o' tracks at sun-up."

The Pirates (hesitating): "No — o" —

Patsey: "I am; know where I kin get a six-shooter?"

The Pirates (almost ready to abandon piracy for bear-*hunting, but* preserving their dignity): "Can't! We've *run'd* away for real pirates."

Patsey: "Not for good!"

The Queen (interposing with sad dignity and real tears in her round blue eyes): "Yes!" (slowly and shaking her head). "Can't go back again. Never! Never! Never! The — the — eye is cast!"

Patsey (bursting with excitement): "No-o! Sho'o! Wanter know."

The Pirates (a little frightened themselves, but tremulous with gratified vanity): "The Perleese is on our track!"

Patsey: "Lemme go with yer!"

Hickory: "Wot 'll yer giv?"

Patsey: "Pistol and er bananer."

Hickory (with judicious prudence): "Let 's see 'em."

Patsey was off like a shot; his bare little red feet trembling under him. In a few minutes he returned with an old-fashioned revolver known as one of "Allen's pepper-boxes" and a large banana. He was at once enrolled, and the banana eaten.

As yet they had resolved on no definite nefarious plan. Hickory, looking down at Patsey's bare feet, instantly took off his own shoes. This bold act sent a thrill through his companions. Wan Lee took off his cloth leggings, Polly removed her shoes and stockings, but, with royal foresight, tied them up in her handkerchief. The last link between them and civilization was broken.

"Let 's go to the Slumgullion."

"Slumgullion" was the name given by the miners to a certain soft, half-liquid mud, formed of the water and finely powdered earth that was carried off by the sluice-boxes during gold-washing, and eventually collected in a broad pool or lagoon before the outlet. There was a pool of this kind a quarter of a mile away, where there were "diggings" worked by Patsey's father, and thither they proceeded along the ridge in single file. When it was reached they solemnly began to wade in its viscid paint-like shallows.

Possibly its unctuousness was pleasant to the touch; possibly there was a fascination in the fact that their parents had forbidden them to go near it, but probably the principal object of this performance was to produce a thick coating of mud on the feet and ankles, which, when dried in the sun, was supposed to harden the skin and render their shoes superfluous. It was also felt to be the first real step towards independence; they looked down at their ensanguined extremities and recognized the impossibility of their ever again crossing (unwashed) the family threshold.

Then they again hesitated. There was a manifest need of some well-defined piratical purpose. The last act was reckless and irretrievable, but it was vague. They gazed at each other. There was a stolid look of resigned and superior tolerance in Wan Lee's eyes.

Polly's glance wandered down the side of the slope to the distant little tunnels or openings made by the miners who were at work in the bowels of the mountain. "I 'd like to go into one of them funny holes," she said to herself, half aloud.

Wan Lee suddenly began to blink his eyes with unwonted excitement. "Catchee tunnel — heap gold," he said quickly. "When manee come outside to catchee dinner — Pilats go inside catchee tunnel! Shabbee! Pilats catchee gold allee samee Melican man!"

"And take perseshiun," said Hickory.

"And hoist the Pirate flag," said Patsey.

"And build a fire, and cook, and have a family," said Polly.

The idea was fascinating to the point of being irresistible. The eyes of the four children became rounder and rounder. They seized each other's hands and swung them backwards and forwards, occasionally lifting their legs in a *solemn rhythmic* movement known only to childhood.

"*It 's orful far off!*" said Patsey with a sudden look of

dark importance. "Pap says it 's free miles on the road. Take all day ter get there."

The bright faces were overcast.

"Less go down er slide!" said Hickory boldly.

They approached the edge of the cliff. The "slide" was simply a sharp incline zigzagging down the side of the mountain used for sliding goods and provisions from the summit to the tunnel-men at the different openings below. The continual traffic had gradually worn a shallow gulley half filled with earth and gravel into the face of the mountain which checked the momentum of the goods in their downward passage, but afforded no foothold for a pedestrian. No one had ever been known to descend a slide. That feat was evidently reserved for the Pirate band. They approached the edge of the slide, hand in hand, hesitated, and the next moment disappeared.

Five minutes later the tunnel-men of the Excelsior mine, a mile below, taking their luncheon on the rude platform of débris before their tunnel, were suddenly driven to shelter in the tunnel from an apparent rain of stones, and rocks, and pebbles, from the cliffs above. Looking up, they were startled at seeing four round objects revolving and bounding in the dust of the slide, which eventually resolved themselves into three boys and a girl. For a moment the good men held their breath in helpless terror. Twice one of the children had struck the outer edge of the bank, and displaced stones that shot a thousand feet down into the dizzy depths of the valley; and now one of them, the girl, had actually rolled out of the slide and was hanging over the chasm supported only by a clump of chamisal to which she clung!

"Hang on by your eyelids, sis! but don't stir, for Heaven's sake!" shouted one of the men, as two others started on a hopeless ascent of the cliff above them.

But a light childish laugh from the clinging little figure

seemed to mock them! Then two small heads appeared at the edge of the slide; then a diminutive figure, whose feet were apparently held by some invisible companion, was shoved over the brink and stretched its tiny arms towards the girl. But in vain, the distance was too great. Another laugh of intense youthful enjoyment followed the failure, and a new insecurity was added to the situation by the unsteady hands and shoulders of the relieving party, who were apparently shaking with laughter. Then the extended figure was seen to detach what looked like a small black rope from its shoulders and throw it to the girl. There was another little giggle. The faces of the men below paled in terror. Then Polly, —for it was she, — hanging to the long pig tail of Wan Lee, was drawn with fits of laughter back in safety to the slide. Their childish treble of appreciation was answered by a ringing cheer from below.

"Darned ef I ever want to cut off a Chinaman's pigtail again, boys," said one of the tunnel-men as he went back to dinner.

Meantime the children had reached the goal and stood before the opening of one of the tunnels. Then these four heroes who had looked with cheerful levity on the deadly peril of their descent became suddenly frightened at the mysterious darkness of the cavern and turned pale at its threshold.

"Mebbee a wicked Joss backside holee, he catchee Pilats," said Wan Lee gravely.

Hickory began to whimper, Patsey drew back, Polly alone stood her ground, albeit with a trembling lip.

"Let 's say our prayers and frighten it away," she said stoutly.

"No! no!" said Wan Lee, with sudden alarm. "No frighten Spillits! You waitee! Chinee boy he talkee *Spillit not to* frighten you." [1]

[1] *The Chinese pray* devoutly to the Evil Spirits not to injure them.

Tucking his hands under his blue blouse, Wan Lee suddenly produced from some mysterious recess of his clothing a quantity of red paper slips which he scattered at the entrance of the cavern. Then drawing from the same inexhaustible receptacle certain squibs or fireworks, he let them off and threw them into the opening. There they went off with a slight fizz and splutter, a momentary glittering of small points in the darkness, and a strong smell of gunpowder. Polly gazed at the spectacle with undisguised awe and fascination. Hickory and Patsey breathed hard with satisfaction: it was beyond their wildest dreams of mystery and romance. Even Wan Lee appeared transfigured into a superior being by the potency of his own spells. But an unaccountable disturbance of some kind in the dim interior of the tunnel quickly drew the blood from their blanched cheeks again. It was a sound like coughing, followed by something like an oath.

"He's made the Evil Spirit orful sick," said Hickory in a loud whisper.

A slight laugh, that to the children seemed demoniacal, followed.

"See!" said Wan Lee. "Evil Spillet he likee Chinee; try talkee him."

The Pirates looked at Wan Lee, not without a certain envy of this manifest favoritism. A fearful desire to continue their awful experiments, instead of pursuing their piratical avocations, was taking possession of them; but Polly, with one of the swift transitions of childhood, immediately began to extemporize a house for the party at the mouth of the tunnel, and, with parental foresight, gathered the fragments of the squibs to build a fire for supper. That frugal meal, consisting of half a ginger biscuit divided into five small portions, each served on a chip of wood, and having a deliciously mysterious flavor of gunpowder and smoke, was soon over. It was necessary after this that

the Pirates should at once seek repose after a day of adventure, which they did for the space of forty seconds in singularly impossible attitudes and far too aggressive snoring. Indeed, Master Hickory's almost upright pose, with tightly folded arms and darkly frowning brows, was felt to be dramatic, but impossible for a longer period. The brief interval enabled Polly to collect herself and to look around her in her usual motherly fashion. Suddenly she started and uttered a cry. In the excitement of the descent she had quite overlooked her doll, and was now regarding it with round-eyed horror.

"Lady Mary's hair's gone!" she cried, convulsively grasping the Pirate Hickory's legs.

Hickory at once recognized the battered doll under the aristocratic title which Polly had long ago bestowed upon it. He stared at the bald and battered head.

"Ha! ha!" he said hoarsely; "skelped by Injins!"

For an instant the delicious suggestion soothed the imaginative Polly. But it was quickly dispelled by Wan Lee.

"Lady Maley's pigtail hangee top side hillee. Catchee on big quartz stone allee same Polly; me go fetchee."

"No!" quickly shrieked the others. The prospect of being left in the proximity of Wan Lee's evil spirit, without Wan Lee's exorcising power, was anything but reassuring. "No, don't go!" Even Polly (dropping a maternal tear on the bald head of Lady Mary) protested against this breaking up of the little circle. "Go to bed!" she said authoritatively, "and sleep till morning."

Thus admonished, the Pirates again retired. This time effectively; for, worn by actual fatigue or soothed by the delicious coolness of the cave, they gradually, one by one, succumbed to real slumber. Polly, withheld from joining them by official and maternal responsibility, sat and blinked at them affectionately.

Gradually she, too, felt herself yielding to the fascination

and mystery of the place and the solitude that encompassed her. Beyond the pleasant shadows where she sat, she saw the great world of mountain and valley through a dreamy haze that seemed to rise from the depths below and occasionally hang before the cavern like a veil. Long waves of spicy heat rolling up the mountain from the valley brought her the smell of pine-trees and bay, and made the landscape swim before her eyes. She could hear the far-off cry of teamsters on some unseen road; she could see the far-off cloud of dust following the mountain stagecoach, whose rattling wheels she could not hear. She felt very lonely, but was not quite afraid; she felt very melancholy, but was not entirely sad; and she could have easily awakened her sleeping companions if she wished.

No; she was a lone widow with nine children, six of whom were already in the lone churchyard on the hill, and the others lying ill with measles and scarlet fever beside her. She had just walked many weary miles that day, and had often begged from door to door for a slice of bread for the starving little ones. It was of no use now — they would die! They would never see their dear mother again. This was a favorite imaginative situation of Polly's, but only indulged when her companions were asleep, partly because she could not trust confederates with her more serious fancies, and partly because they were at such times passive in her hands. She glanced timidly around. Satisfied that no one could observe her, she softly visited the bedside of each of her companions, and administered from a purely fictitious bottle spoonfuls of invisible medicine. Physical correction in the form of slight taps, which they always required, and in which Polly was strong, was only withheld now from a sense of their weak condition. But in vain; they succumbed to the fell disease, — they always died at this juncture, — and Polly was left alone. She thought of the little church where she had once seen a

funeral, and remembered the nice smell of the flowers; she dwelt with melancholy satisfaction on the nine little tombstones in the graveyard, each with an inscription, and looked forward with gentle anticipation to the long summer days when, with Lady Mary in her lap, she would sit on those graves clad in the deepest mourning. The fact that the unhappy victims at times moved as it were uneasily in their graves, or snored, did not affect Polly's imaginative contemplation, nor withhold the tears that gathered in her round eyes.

Presently, the lids of the round eyes began to droop, the landscape beyond began to be more confused, and sometimes to disappear entirely and reappear again with startling distinctness. Then a sound of rippling water from the little stream that flowed from the mouth of the tunnel soothed her and seemed to carry her away with it, and then everything was dark.

The next thing that she remembered was that she was apparently being carried along on some gliding object to the sound of rippling water. She was not alone, for her three companions were lying beside her, rather tightly packed and squeezed in the same mysterious vehicle. Even in the profound darkness that surrounded her, Polly could feel and hear that they were accompanied, and once or twice a faint streak of light from the side of the tunnel showed her gigantic shadows walking slowly on either side of the gliding car. She felt the little hands of her associates seeking hers, and knew they were awake and conscious, and she returned to each a reassuring pressure from the large protecting instinct of her maternal little heart. Presently the car glided into an open space of bright light, and stopped. The transition from the darkness of the tunnel at first dazzled their eyes. It was like a dream.

They were in a circular cavern from which three other *tunnels, like* the one they had passed through, diverged.

The walls, lit up by fifty or sixty candles stuck at irregular intervals in crevices of the rock, were of glittering quartz and mica. But more remarkable than all were the inmates of the cavern, who were ranged round the walls, — men who, like their attendants, seemed to be of extra stature; who had blackened faces, wore red bandana handkerchiefs round their heads and their waists, and carried enormous knives and pistols stuck in their belts. On a raised platform made of a packing-box on which was rudely painted a skull and cross-bones, sat the chief or leader of the band covered with a buffalo robe; on either side of him were two small barrels marked "Grog" and "Gunpowder." The children stared and clung closer to Polly. Yet, in spite of these desperate and warlike accessories, the strangers bore a singular resemblance to "Christy Minstrels" in their blackened faces and attitudes that somehow made them seem less awful. In particular, Polly was impressed with the fact that even the most ferocious had a certain kindliness of eye, and showed their teeth almost idiotically.

"Welcome!" said the leader, — "welcome to the Pirates' Cave! The Red Rover of the North Fork of the Stanislaus River salutes the Queen of the Pirate Isle!" He rose up and made an extraordinary bow. It was repeated by the others with more or less exaggeration, to the point of one humorist losing his balance!

"Oh, thank you very much," said Polly timidly, but drawing her little flock closer to her with a small protecting arm; "but could you — would you — please — tell us — what time it is?"

"We are approaching the middle of Next Week," said the leader gravely; "but what of that? Time is made for slaves! The Red Rover seeks it not! Why should the Queen?"

"I think we must be going," hesitated Polly, yet by no means displeased with the recognition of her rank.

"Not until we have paid homage to Your Majesty," returned the leader. "What ho! there! Let Brother Step-and-Fetch-It pass the Queen around that we may do her honor." Observing that Polly shrank slightly back, he added: "Fear nothing; the man who hurts a hair of Her Majesty's head dies by this hand. Ah! ha!"

The others all said ha! ha! and danced alternately on one leg and then on the other, but always with the same dark resemblance to Christy Minstrels. Brother Step-and-Fetch-It, whose very long beard had a confusing suggestion of being a part of the leader's buffalo robe, lifted her gently in his arms and carried her to the Red Rovers in turn. Each one bestowed a kiss upon her cheek or forehead, and would have taken her in his arms, or on his knees, or otherwise lingered over his salute, but they were sternly restrained by their leader. When the solemn rite was concluded, Step-and-Fetch-It paid his own courtesy with an extra squeeze of the curly head, and deposited her again in the truck, a little frightened, a little astonished, but with a considerable accession to her dignity. Hickory and Patsey looked on with stupefied amazement. Wan Lee alone remained stolid and unimpressed, regarding the scene with calm and triangular eyes.

"Will Your Majesty see the Red Rovers dance?"

"No, if you please," said Polly, with gentle seriousness.

"Will Your Majesty fire this barrel of gunpowder, or tap this breaker of grog?"

"No, I thank you."

"Is there no command Your Majesty would lay upon us?"

"No, please," said Polly, in a failing voice.

"Is there anything Your Majesty has lost? Think again! Will Your Majesty deign to cast your royal eyes *on this?*"

He drew from under his buffalo robe what seemed like a

long tress of blond hair, and held it aloft. Polly instantly recognized the missing scalp of her hapless doll.

"If you please, sir, it 's Lady Mary's. She 's lost it."

"And lost it — Your Majesty — only to find something more precious. Would Your Majesty hear the story?"

A little alarmed, a little curious, a little self-anxious, and a little induced by the nudges and pinches of her companions, the Queen blushingly signified her royal assent.

"Enough. Bring refreshments. Will Your Majesty prefer wintergreen, peppermint, rose, or acidulated drops? Red or white? Or perhaps Your Majesty will let me recommend these bull's-eyes," said the leader, as a collection of sweets in a hat were suddenly produced from the barrel labeled "Gunpowder" and handed to the children.

"Listen," he continued, in a silence broken only by the gentle sucking of bull's-eyes. "Many years ago the old Red Rovers of these parts locked up all their treasures in a secret cavern in this mountain. They used spells and magic to keep it from being entered or found by anybody, for there was a certain mark upon it made by a peculiar rock that stuck out of it, which signified what there was below. Long afterwards, other Red Rovers who had heard of it came here and spent days and days trying to discover it, digging holes and blasting tunnels like this, but of no use! Sometimes they thought they discovered the magic marks in the peculiar rock that stuck out of it, but when they dug there they found no treasure. And why? Because there was a magic spell upon it. And what was that magic spell? Why, this! It could only be discovered by a person who could not possibly know that he or she had discovered it; who never could or would be able to enjoy it; who could never see it, never feel it, never, in fact, know anything at all about it! It was n't a dead man, it was n't an animal, it was n't a baby!"

"Why," said Polly, jumping up and clapping her hands, *"it was a Dolly."*

"Your Majesty's head is level! Your Majesty has guessed it!" said the leader, gravely. "It was Your Majesty's own dolly, Lady Mary, who broke the spell! When Your Majesty came down the slide, the doll fell from your gracious hand when your foot slipped. Your Majesty recovered Lady Mary, but did not observe that her hair had caught in a peculiar rock, called the 'Outcrop,' and remained behind! When, later on, while sitting with your attendants at the mouth of the tunnel, Your Majesty discovered that Lady Mary's hair was gone, I overheard Your Majesty, and dispatched the trusty Step-and-Fetch-It to seek it at the mountain side. He did so, and found it clinging to the rock, and beneath it — the entrance to the Secret Cave!"

Patsey and Hickory, who, failing to understand a word of this explanation, had given themselves up to the unconstrained enjoyment of the sweets, began now to apprehend that some change was impending, and prepared for the worst by hastily swallowing what they had in their mouths, thus defying enchantment, and getting ready for speech. Polly, who had closely followed the story, albeit with the embellishments of her own imagination, made her eyes rounder than ever. A bland smile broke on Wan Lee's face, as, to the children's amazement, he quietly disengaged himself from the group and stepped before the leader.

"Melican man plenty foolee Melican chillern. No foolee China boy! China boy knowee you. *You* no Led Lofer. *You* no Pilat — you allee same tunnel-man — you Bob Johnson! Me shabbee you! You dressee up allee same as Led Lofer — but you Bob Johnson — allee same. My fader washee washee for you. You no payee him. You owee him folty dolla! Me blingee you billee. You no payee billee! You say, 'Chalkee up, John.' You say, 'Bimeby, John.' But me no catchee folty dolla!"

A roar of laughter followed, in which even the leader *apparently forgot* himself enough to join. But the next

moment springing to his feet he shouted, "Ho! ho! A traitor! Away with him to the deepest dungeon beneath the castle moat!"

Hickory and Patsey began to whimper. But Polly, albeit with a tremulous lip, stepped to the side of her little Pagan friend. "Don't you dare touch him," she said, with a shake of unexpected determination in her little curly head; "if you do, I'll tell my father, and he will slay you! All of you — there!"

"Your father! Then you are *not* the Queen!"

It was a sore struggle to Polly to abdicate her royal position; it was harder to do it with befitting dignity. To evade the direct question she was obliged to abandon her defiant attitude. "If you please, sir," she said hurriedly, with an increasing color and no stops, "we 're not always Pirates, you know, and Wan Lee is only our boy what brushes my shoes in the morning, and runs of errands, and he does n't mean anything bad, sir, and we 'd like to take him back home with us."

"Enough," said the leader, changing his entire manner with the most sudden and shameless inconsistency. "You shall go back together, and woe betide the miscreant who would prevent it! What say you, brothers? What shall be his fate who dares to separate our noble Queen from her faithful Chinese henchman?"

"He shall die!" roared the others, with beaming cheerfulness.

"And what say you — shall we see them home?"

"We will!" roared the others.

Before the children could fairly comprehend what had passed, they were again lifted into the truck and began to glide back into the tunnel they had just quitted. But not again in darkness and silence; the entire band of Red Rovers accompanied them, illuminating the dark passage with the candles they had snatched from the walls. In a

few moments they were at the entrance again. The great world lay beyond them once more with rocks and valleys suffused by the rosy light of the setting sun. The past seemed like a dream.

But were they really awake now? They could not tell. They accepted everything with the confidence and credulity of all children who have no experience to compare with their first impressions and to whom the future contains nothing impossible. It was without surprise, therefore, that they felt themselves lifted on the shoulders of the men who were making quite a procession along the steep trail towards the settlement again. Polly noticed that at the mouth of the other tunnels they were greeted by men as if they were carrying tidings of great joy; that they stopped to rejoice together, and that in some mysterious manner their conductors had got their faces washed, and had become more like beings of the outer world. When they neared the settlement the excitement seemed to have become greater; people rushed out to shake hands with the men who were carrying them, and overpowered even the children with questions they could not understand. Only one sentence Polly could clearly remember as being the burden of all congratulations. "Struck the old lead at last!" With a faint consciousness that she knew something about it, she tried to assume a dignified attitude on the leader's shoulders, even while she was beginning to be heavy with sleep.

And then she remembered a crowd near her father's house, out of which her father came smiling pleasantly on her, but not interfering with her triumphal progress until the leader finally deposited her in her mother's lap in their own sitting-room. And then she remembered being "cross," and declining to answer any questions, and shortly afterwards found herself comfortably in bed. Then she heard *her mother* say to her father: —

"*It really* seems too ridiculous for anything, John; the

idea of those grown men dressing themselves up to play with children."

"Ridiculous or not," said her father, "these grown men of the Excelsior mine have just struck the famous old lode of Red Mountain, which is as good as a fortune to everybody on the Ridge, and were as wild as boys! And they say it never would have been found if Polly had n't tumbled over the slide directly on top of the outcrop, and left the absurd wig of that wretched doll of hers to mark its site."

"And that," murmured Polly sleepily to her doll as she drew it closer to her breast, "is all that they know of it."

A MOTHER OF FIVE

She was a mother — and a rather exemplary one — of five children, although her own age was barely nine. Two of these children were twins, and she generally alluded to them as "Mr. Amplach's children," referring to an exceedingly respectable gentleman in the next settlement, who, I have reason to believe, had never set eyes on her or them. The twins were quite naturally alike, — having been in a previous state of existence two ninepins, — and were still somewhat vague and inchoate below their low shoulders in their long clothes, but were also firm and globular about the head, and there were not wanting those who professed to see in this an unmistakable resemblance to their reputed father. The other children were dolls of different ages, sex, and condition, but the twins may be said to have been distinctly her own conception. Yet such was her admirable and impartial maternity that she never made any difference between them. "The Amplach's children" was a description rather than a distinction.

She was herself the motherless child of Robert Foulkes, a hard-working but somewhat improvident teamster on the express route between Big Bend and Reno. His daily avocation, when she was not actually with him in the wagon, led to an occasional dispersion of herself and her progeny along the road and at wayside stations between those places. But the family was generally collected together by rough but kindly hands already familiar with the handling of her children. I have a very vivid recollection of *Jim Carter* trampling into a saloon, after a five-mile

walk through a snow-drift, with an Amplach twin in his pocket. "Suthin' ought to be done," he growled, "to make Meary a little more careful o' them Amplach children; I picked up one outer the snow a mile beyond Big Bend." "God bless my soul!" said a casual passenger, looking up hastily; "I did n't know Mr. Amplach was married." Jim winked diabolically at us over his glass. "No more did I," he responded gloomily, "but you can't tell anything about the ways o' them respectable, psalm-singing jay-birds." Having thus disposed of Amplach's character, later on, when he was alone with Mary, — or "Meary," as she chose to pronounce it, — the rascal worked upon her feelings with an account of the infant Amplach's sufferings in the snow-drift and its agonized whisperings for "Meary! Meary!" until real tears stood in Mary's blue eyes. "Let this be a lesson to you," he concluded, drawing the ninepin dexterously from his pocket, "for it took nigh a quart of the best forty-rod whiskey to bring that child to." Not only did Mary firmly believe him, but for weeks afterwards "Julian Amplach" — this unhappy twin — was kept in a somnolent attitude in the cart, and was believed to have contracted dissipated habits from the effects of his heroic treatment.

Her numerous family was achieved in only two years, and succeeded her first child, which was brought from Sacramento at considerable expense by a Mr. William Dodd, also a teamster, on her seventh birthday. This, by one of those rare inventions known only to a child's vocabulary, she at once called "Misery," — probably a combination of "Missy," as she herself was formerly termed by strangers, and "Missouri," her native State. It was an excessively large doll at first, — Mr. Dodd wishing to get the worth of his money, — but time, and perhaps an excess of maternal care, remedied the defect, and it lost flesh and certain unemployed parts of its limbs very rapidly. It was further

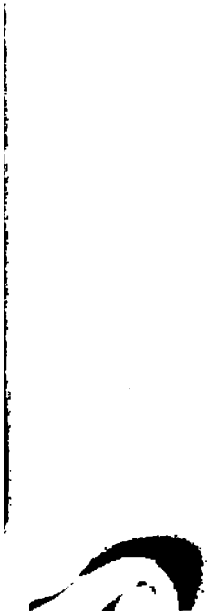
reduced in bulk by falling under the wagon and having the whole train pass over it, but singularly enough its greatest attenuation was in the head and shoulders — the complexion peeling off as a solid layer, followed by the disappearance of distinct strata of its extraordinary composition. This continued until the head and shoulders were much too small for even its reduced frame, and all the devices of childish millinery — a shawl secured with tacks and well hammered in, and a hat which tilted backwards and forwards and never appeared at the same angle — failed to restore symmetry. Until one dreadful morning, after an imprudent bath, the whole upper structure disappeared, leaving two hideous iron prongs standing erect from the spinal column. Even an imaginative child like Mary could not accept this sort of thing as a head. Later in the day Jack Roper, the blacksmith at the "Crossing," was concerned at the plaintive appearance, before his forge, of a little girl, clad in a bright blue pinafore of the same color as her eyes, carrying her monstrous offspring in her arms. Jack recognized her, and instantly divined the situation. "You have n't," he suggested kindly, "got another head at home — suthin' left over?" Mary shook her head sadly; even her prolific maternity was not equal to the creation of children in detail. "Nor anythin' like a head?" he persisted sympathetically. Mary's loving eyes filled with tears. "No, nuffen!" "You could n't," he continued thoughtfully, "use her the other side up? — we might get a fine pair o' legs outer them irons," he added, touching the two prongs with artistic suggestion. "Now look here" — He was about to tilt the doll over when a small cry of feminine distress and a swift movement of a matronly little arm arrested the evident indiscretion. "I see," he said gravely. "Well, you come here to-morrow, *and we 'll fix* up suthin' to work her." Jack was thoughtful *the rest of the* day, more than usually impatient with

certain stubborn mules to be shod, and even knocked off work an hour earlier to walk to Big Bend and a rival shop. But the next morning when the trustful and anxious mother appeared at the forge she uttered a scream of delight. Jack had neatly joined a hollow iron globe, taken from the newel post of some old iron staircase railing, to the two prongs, and covered it with a coat of red fireproof paint. It was true that its complexion was rather high, that it was inclined to be top-heavy, and that in the long run the other dolls suffered considerably by enforced association with this unyielding and implacable head and shoulders, but this did not diminish Mary's joy over her restored firstborn. Even its utter absence of features was no defect in a family where features were as evanescent as in hers, and the most ordinary student of evolution could see that the "Amplach" ninepins were in legitimate succession to the globular-headed "Misery." For a time I think that Mary even preferred her to the others. Howbeit it was a pretty sight to see her on a summer afternoon sitting upon a wayside stump, her other children dutifully ranged around her, and the hard, unfeeling head of Misery pressed deep down into her loving little heart, as she swayed from side to side, crooning her plaintive lullaby. Small wonder that the bees took up the song and droned a slumbrous accompaniment, or that high above her head the enormous pines, stirred through their depths by the soft Sierran air, — or Heaven knows what, — let slip flickering lights and shadows to play over that cast-iron face, until the child, looking down upon it with the quick, transforming power of love, thought that it smiled?

The two remaining members of the family were less distinctive. "Gloriana" — pronounced as two words: "Glory Anna" — being the work of her father, who also named it — was simply a cylindrical roll of canvas wagon-covering, girt so as to define a neck and waist, with a rudely inked face

— altogether a weak, pitiable, man-like invention; and "Johnny Dear," alleged to be the representative of John Doremus, a young storekeeper who occasionally supplied Mary with gratuitous sweets. Mary never admitted this, and, as we were all gentlemen along that road, we were blind to the suggestion. "Johnny Dear" was originally a small plaster-phrenological cast of a head and bust, begged from some shop window in the county town, with a body clearly constructed by Mary herself. It was an ominous fact that it was always dressed as a *boy*, and was distinctly the most *human*-looking of all her progeny. Indeed, in spite of the faculties that were legibly printed all over its smooth, white, hairless head, it was appallingly lifelike. Left sometimes by Mary astride of the branch of a wayside tree, horsemen had been known to dismount hurriedly and examine it, returning with a mystified smile, and it was on record that Yuba Bill had once pulled up the Pioneer Coach at the request of curious and imploring passengers, and then grimly installed "Johnny Dear" beside him on the box-seat, publicly delivering him to Mary at Big Bend, to her wide-eyed confusion and the first blush we had ever seen on her round, chubby, sunburnt cheeks. It may seem strange that, with her great popularity and her well-known maternal instincts, she had not been kept fully supplied with proper and more conventional dolls; but it was soon recognized that she did not care for them — left their waxen faces, rolling eyes, and abundant hair in ditches, or stripped them to help clothe the more extravagant creatures of her fancy. So it came that "Johnny Dear's" strictly classical profile looked out from under a girl's fashionable straw sailor hat, to the utter obliteration of his prominent intellectual faculties; the Amplach twins wore bonnets on their ninepin heads, and even an attempt was made to fit a flaxen scalp on the iron-headed Misery. But her dolls were always a creation of her own — her affection for them increasing

IT WAS A PRETTY SIGHT



with the demand upon her imagination. This may seem somewhat inconsistent with her habit of occasionally abandoning them in the woods or in the ditches. But she had an unbounded confidence in the kindly maternity of nature, and trusted her children to the breast of the Great Mother as freely as she did herself in her own motherlessness. And this confidence was rarely betrayed. Rats, mice, snails, wildcats, panther, and bear never touched her lost waifs. Even the elements were kindly; an Amplach twin buried under a snow-drift in high altitudes reappeared smilingly in the spring in all its wooden and painted integrity. We were all Pantheists then — and believed this implicitly. It was only when exposed to the milder forces of civilization that Mary had anything to fear. Yet even then, when Patsey O'Connor's domestic goat had once tried to "sample" the lost Misery, he had retreated with the loss of three front teeth, and Thompson's mule came out of an encounter with that iron-headed prodigy with a sprained hind leg and a cut and swollen pastern.

But these were the simple Arcadian days of the road between Big Bend and Reno, and progress and prosperity, alas, brought changes in their wake. It was already whispered that Mary ought to be going to school, and Mr. Amplach — still happily oblivious of the liberties taken with his name — as trustee of the public school at Duckville, had intimated that Mary's Bohemian wanderings were a scandal to the county. She was growing up in ignorance, — a dreadful ignorance of everything but the chivalry, the deep tenderness, the delicacy and unselfishness of the rude men around her, and obliviousness of faith in anything but the immeasurable bounty of nature towards her and her children. Of course there was a fierce discussion between "the boys" of the road and the few married families of the settlement on this point, but, of course, progress and "snivelization" — as the boys chose to call it — triumphed.

The projection of a railroad settled it; Robert Foulkes, promoted to a foremanship of a division of the line, was made to understand that his daughter must be educated.

But the terrible question of Mary's family remained. No school would open its doors to that heterogeneous collection, and Mary's little heart would have broken over the rude dispersal or heroic burning of her children. The ingenuity of Jack Roper suggested a compromise. She was allowed to select one to take to school with her; the others were *adopted* by certain of her friends, and she was to be permitted to visit them every Saturday afternoon. The selection was a cruel trial, — so cruel that, knowing her undoubted preference for her firstborn, Misery, we would not have interfered for worlds, but in her unexpected choice of "Johnny Dear" the most unworldly of us knew that it was the first glimmering of feminine tact — her first submission to the world of propriety that she was now entering. "Johnny Dear" was undoubtedly the most presentable; even more, there was an educational suggestion in its prominent, mapped-out phrenological organs. The adopted fathers were loyal to their trust. Indeed, for years afterwards the blacksmith kept the iron-headed Misery on a rude shelf, like a shrine, near his bunk; nobody but himself and Meary ever knew the secret, stolen, and thrilling interviews that took place during the first days of their separation. Certain facts, however, transpired concerning Mary's equal faithfulness to another of her children. It is said that one Saturday afternoon, when the road manager of the new line was seated in his office at Reno in private business discussion with two directors, a gentle tap was heard at the door. It was opened to an eager little face, a pair of blue eyes, and a blue pinafore. To the astonishment of the directors, a change came over the face of the *manager.* Taking the child gently by the hand, he walked *to his desk,* on which the papers of the new line were

scattered, and drew open a drawer from which he took a large ninepin extraordinarily dressed as a doll. The astonishment of the two gentlemen was increased at the following quaint colloquy between the manager and the child.

"She 's doing remarkably well in spite of the trying weather, but I have had to keep her very quiet," said the manager, regarding the ninepin critically.

"Ess," said Mary quickly. "It 's just the same with Johnny Dear; his cough is f'ightful at nights. But Misery 's all right. I 've just been to see her."

"There 's a good deal of scarlet-fever around," continued the manager, with quiet concern, "and we can't be too careful. But I shall take her for a little run down the line to-morrow."

The eyes of Mary sparkled and overflowed like blue water. Then there was a kiss, a little laugh, a shy glance at the two curious strangers, the blue pinafore fluttered away, and the colloquy ended. She was equally attentive in her care of the others, but the rag baby "Gloriana," who had found a home in Jim Carter's cabin at the Ridge, living too far for daily visits, was brought down regularly on Saturday afternoon to Mary's house by Jim, tucked in asleep in his saddle-bags, or riding gallantly before him on the horn of his saddle. On Sunday there was a dress parade of all the dolls, which kept Mary in heart for the next week's desolation.

But there came one Saturday and Sunday when Mary did not appear, and it was known along the road that she had been called to San Francisco to meet an aunt who had just arrived from "the States." It was a vacant Sunday to "the boys," — a very hollow, unsanctified Sunday, somehow, without that little figure. But the next Sunday and the next were still worse, and then it was known that the dreadful aunt was making much of Mary, and was sending her to a grand school, — a convent at Santa Clara, — where

it was rumored girls were turned out so accomplished that their own parents did not know them. But *we* knew that was impossible to our Mary; and a letter which came from her at the end of the month, and before the convent had closed upon the blue pinafore, satisfied us, and was balm to our anxious hearts. It was characteristic of Mary; it was addressed to nobody in particular, and would — but for the prudence of the aunt — have been intrusted to the post-office open and undirected. It was a single sheet, handed to us without a word by her father; but, as we passed it from hand to hand, we understood it as if we had heard our lost playfellow's voice.

"There 's more houses in Frisco than you kin shake a stick at and wimmens till you kant rest, but mules and jakasses ain't got no sho, nor blacksmiffs shops, wich is not to be seen no wear. Rapits and Skwirls also bares and panfers is on-noun and unforgotten on account of the streets and Sunday skoles. Jim Roper you orter be very good to Mizzery on a kount of my not bein' here, and not harten your hart to her bekos she is top heavy — which is ontroo and simply an imptient lie — like you allus make. I have a kinary bird wot sings deliteful — but is n't a yellerhamer sutch as I know, as you 'd think. Dear Mister Montgommery, don't keep Gulan Amplak to mutch shet up in office drors; it is n't good for his lungs and chest. And don't you ink his head — nother! you 're as bad as the rest. Johnny Dear, you must be very kind to your attopted father, and you, Glory Anna, nust lov your kind Jimmy Carter verry mutch for taking you hossback so offen. I has been buggy ridin' with an orficer who has killed injuns real! I am comin' back soon with grate affeckshun, so luke out and mind."

But it was three years before she returned, and this was her last and only letter. The "adopted fathers" of her *children* were faithful, however, and when the new line

was opened, and it was understood that she was to be present with her father at the ceremony, they came, with a common understanding, to the station to meet their old playmate. They were ranged along the platform — poor Jack Roper a little overweighted with a bundle he was carrying on his left arm. And then a young girl, in the freshness of her teens and the spotless purity of a muslin frock that although brief in skirt was perfect in fit, faultlessly booted and gloved, tripped from the train, and offered a delicate hand in turn to each of her old friends. Nothing could be prettier than the smile on the cheeks that were no longer sunburnt; nothing could be clearer than the blue eyes lifted frankly to theirs. And yet, as she gracefully turned away with her father, the faces of the four adopted parents were found to be as red and embarrassed as her own on the day that Yuba Bill drove up publicly with "Johnny Dear" on the box-seat.

"You were n't such a fool," said Jack Montgomery to Roper, "as to bring 'Misery' here with you?"

"I was," said Roper, with a constrained laugh, — "and you?" He had just caught sight of the head of a ninepin peeping from the manager's pocket. The man laughed, and then the four turned silently away.

"Mary" had indeed come back to them; but not "The Mother of Five"!

SARAH WALKER

It was very hot. Not a breath of air was stirring throughout the western wing of the Greyport Hotel, and the usual feverish life of its four hundred inmates had succumbed to the weather. The great veranda was deserted; the corridors were desolated; no footfall echoed in the passages; the lazy rustle of a wandering skirt, or a passing sigh that was half a pant, seemed to intensify the heated silence. An intoxicated bee, disgracefully unsteady in wing and leg, who had been holding an inebriated conversation with himself in the corner of my window-pane, had gone to sleep at last and was snoring. The errant prince might have entered the slumberous halls unchallenged, and walked into any of the darkened rooms whose open doors gaped for more air, without awakening the veriest Greyport flirt with his salutation. At times a drowsy voice, a lazily interjected sentence, an incoherent protest, a long-drawn phrase of saccharine tenuity suddenly broken off with a gasp, came vaguely to the ear, as if indicating a half-suspended, half-articulated existence somewhere, but not definite enough to indicate conversation. In the midst of this, there was the sudden crying of a child.

I looked up from my work. Through the camera of my jealously guarded window, I could catch a glimpse of the vivid, quivering blue of the sky, the glittering intensity of the ocean, the long motionless leaves of the horse-chestnut in the road, — all utterly inconsistent with anything as *active as this* lamentation. I stepped to the open door and *into the* silent hall.

Apparently the noise had attracted the equal attention of my neighbors. A vague chorus of "Sarah Walker," in querulous recognition, of "O Lord! that child again!" in hopeless protest, rose faintly from the different rooms. As the lamentations seemed to approach nearer, the visitors' doors were successively shut, swift footsteps hurried along the hall; past my open door came a momentary vision of a heated nursemaid carrying a tumultuous chaos of frilled skirts, flying sash, rebellious slippers, and tossing curls; there was a moment's rallying struggle before the room nearly opposite mine, and then a door opened and shut upon the vision. It was Sarah Walker!

Everybody knew her; few had ever seen more of her than this passing vision. In the great hall, in the dining-room, in the vast parlors, in the garden, in the avenue, on the beach, a sound of lamentation had always been followed by this same brief apparition. Was there a sudden pause among the dancers and a subjugation of the loudest bassoons in the early evening "hop," the explanation was given in the words "Sarah Walker." Was there a wild confusion among the morning bathers on the sands, people whispered "Sarah Walker." A panic among the waiters at dinner, an interruption in the Sunday sacred concert, a disorganization of the after-dinner promenade on the veranda, was instantly referred to Sarah Walker. Nor were her efforts confined entirely to public life. In cosy corners and darkened recesses, bearded lips withheld the amorous declaration to mutter "Sarah Walker" between their clenched teeth; coy and bashful tongues found speech at last in the rapid formulation of "Sarah Walker." Nobody ever thought of abbreviating her full name. The two people in the hotel, otherwise individualized, but known only as "Sarah Walker's father" and "Sarah Walker's mother," and never as Mr. and Mrs. Walker, addressed her only as "Sarah Walker;" two animals that were occasionally

part of this passing pageant were known as "Sarah Walker's dog" and "Sarah Walker's cat," and later it was my proud privilege to sink my own individuality under the title of "that friend of Sarah Walker's."

It must not be supposed that she had attained this baleful eminence without some active criticism. Every parent in the Greyport Hotel had held his or her theory of the particular defects of Sarah Walker's education; every virgin and bachelor had openly expressed views of the peculiar discipline that was necessary to her subjugation. It may be roughly estimated that she would have spent the entire nine years of her active life in a dark cupboard on an exclusive diet of bread and water, had this discipline obtained; while, on the other hand, had the educational theories of the parental assembly prevailed, she would have ere this shone an etherealized essence in the angelic host. In either event she would have "ceased from troubling," which was the general Greyport idea of higher education. A paper read before our Literary Society on "Sarah Walker and other Infantile Diseases," was referred to in the catalogue as "Walker, Sarah, Prevention and Cure," while the usual burlesque legislation of our summer season culminated in the Act entitled "An Act to amend an Act entitled an Act for the abatement of Sarah Walker." As she was hereafter exclusively to be fed "on the *provisions* of this Act," some idea of its general tone may be gathered. It was a singular fact in this point of her history that her natural progenitors not only offered no resistance to the doubtful celebrity of their offspring, but, by hopelessly accepting the situation, to some extent posed as Sarah Walker's victims. Mr. and Mrs Walker were known to be rich, respectable, and indulgent to their only child. They themselves had been evolved from a previous generation of promiscuously acquired wealth *into the repose* of inherited property, but it was currently *accepted that* Sarah had "cast back" and reincarnated some

waif on the deck of an emigrant ship at the beginning of the century.

Such was the child separated from me by this portentous history, a narrow passage, and a closed nursery door. Presently, however, the door was partly opened again as if to admit the air. The crying had ceased, but in its place the monotonous Voice of Conscience, for the moment personated by Sarah Walker's nursemaid, kept alive a drowsy recollection of Sarah Walker's transgressions.

"You see," said the Voice, "what a dreadful thing it is for a little girl to go on as you do. I am astonished at you, Sarah Walker. So is everybody; so is the good lady next door; so is the kind gentleman opposite; so is all! Where you expect to go to, 'Evin only knows! How you expect to be forgiven, saints alone can tell! But so it is always, and yet you keep it up. And would n't you like it different, Sarah Walker? Would n't you like to have everybody love you? Would n't you like them good ladies next door, and that nice gentleman opposite, all to kinder rise up and say, 'Oh, what a dear good little girl Sarah Walker is'?" The interpolation of a smacking sound of lips, as if in unctuous anticipation of Sarah Walker's virtue, here ensued. "Oh, what a dear, good, sw-e-et, lovely little girl Sarah Walker is!"

There was a dead silence. It may have been fancy, but I thought that some of the doors in the passage creaked softly as if in listening expectation. Then the silence was broken by a sigh. Had Sarah Walker ingloriously succumbed? Rash and impotent conclusion!

"I don't," said Sarah Walker's voice, slowly rising until it broke on the crest of a mountainous sob, — "I — don't — want — 'em — to — love me. I — don't want — 'em — to say — what a — dear — good — little girl — Sarah Walker is!" She caught her breath. "I — want — 'em — to say — what a *naughty* — bad — dirty — horrid — filthy — *little girl Sarah* Walker is — so I do. There!"

The doors slammed all along the passages. The dreadful issue was joined. I softly crossed the hall and looked into Sarah Walker's room.

The light from a half-opened shutter fell full upon her rebellious little figure. She had stiffened herself in a large easy-chair into the attitude in which she had been evidently deposited there by the nurse whose torn-off apron she still held rigidly in one hand. Her shapely legs stood out before her, jointless and inflexible to the point of her tiny shoes — a pose copied with pathetic fidelity by the French doll at her feet. The attitude must have been dreadfully uncomfortable, and maintained only as being replete with some vague insults to the person who had put her down, as exhibiting a wild indecorum of silken stocking. A mystified kitten — Sarah Walker's inseparable — was held, as rigidly under one arm with equal dumb aggressiveness. Following the stiff line of her half-recumbent figure, her head suddenly appeared perpendicularly erect — yet the only mobile part of her body. A dazzling sunburst of silky hair, the color of burnished copper, partly hid her neck and shoulders and the back of the chair. Her eyes were a darker shade of the same color — the orbits appearing deeper and larger from the rubbing in of habitual tears from long wet lashes. Nothing so far seemed inconsistent with her infelix reputation, but, strange to say, her other features were marked by delicacy and refinement, and her mouth — that sorely exercised and justly dreaded member — was small and pretty, albeit slightly dropped at the corners.

The immediate effect of my intrusion was limited solely to the nursemaid. Swooping suddenly upon Sarah Walker's too evident déshabillé, she made two or three attempts to pluck her into propriety; but the child, recognizing the cause as well as the effect, looked askance at me and only *stiffened herself* the more. "Sarah Walker, I 'm shocked."

"*It ain't his* room anyway," said Sarah, eying me *malevolently*. "What 's he doing here?"

There was so much truth in this that I involuntarily drew back abashed. The nursemaid ejaculated, "Sarah!" and lifted her eyes in hopeless protest.

"And he need n't come seeing *you*," continued Sarah, lazily rubbing the back of her head against the chair; "my papa don't allow it. He warned you 'bout the other gentleman, you know."

"Sarah Walker!"

I felt it was necessary to say something. "Don't you want to come with me and look at the sea?" I said, with utter feebleness of invention. To my surprise, instead of actively assaulting me Sarah Walker got up, shook her hair over her shoulders, and took my hand.

"With your hair in that state?" almost screamed the domestic. But Sarah Walker had already pulled me into the hall. What particularly offensive form of opposition to authority was implied in this prompt assent to my proposal I could only darkly guess. For myself I knew I must appear to her a weak impostor. What would there possibly be in the sea to interest Sarah Walker? For the moment I prayed for a water-spout, a shipwreck, a whale, or any marine miracle to astound her and redeem my character. I walked guiltily down the hall, holding her hand bashfully in mine. I noticed that her breast began to heave convulsively; if she cried I knew I should mingle my tears with hers. We reached the veranda in gloomy silence. As I expected, the sea lay before us glittering in the sun — vacant, staring, flat, and hopelessly and unquestionably uninteresting.

"I knew it all along," said Sarah Walker, turning down the corners of her mouth; "there never was anything to see. I know why you got me to come here. You want to tell me if I 'm a good girl you 'll take me to sail some day. You want to say if I 'm bad the sea will swallow me up. That 's all you want, you horrid thing, you!"

"Hush!" I said, pointing to the corner of the veranda.

A desperate idea of escape had just seized me. Bolt upright in the recess of a window sat a nursemaid, who had succumbed to sleep equally with her helpless charge in the perambulator beside her. I instantly recognized the infant — a popular organism known as "Baby Buckly" — the prodigy of the Greyport Hotel, the pet of its enthusiastic womanhood. Fat and featureless, pink and pincushiony, it was borrowed by gushing maidenhood, exchanged by idiotic maternity, and had grown unctuous and tumefacient under the kisses and embraces of half the hotel. Even in its present repose it looked moist and shiny from indiscriminate and promiscuous osculation.

"Let 's borrow Baby Buckly," I said recklessly.

Sarah Walker at once stopped crying. I don't know how she did it, but the cessation was instantaneous, as if she had turned off a tap somewhere.

"And put it in Mr. Peters's bed!" I continued.

Peters being notoriously a grim bachelor, the bare suggestion bristled with outrage. Sarah Walker's eyes sparkled.

"You don't mean it! — go 'way!" — she said, with affected coyness.

"But I do! Come."

We extracted it noiselessly together, — that is, Sarah Walker did, with deft womanliness, — carried it darkly along the hall to No. 27, and deposited it in Peters's bed, where it lay like a freshly opened oyster. We then returned hand in hand to my room, where we looked out of the window on the sea. It was observable that there was no lack of interest in Sarah Walker now.

Before five minutes had elapsed some one breathlessly passed the open door while we were still engaged in marine observation. This was followed by return footsteps and a succession of swiftly rustling garments, until the majority

of the women in our wing had apparently passed our room, and we saw an irregular stream of nursemaids and mothers converging towards the hotel out of the grateful shadow of arbors, trees, and marquees. In fact, we were still engaged in observation when Sarah Walker's nurse came to fetch her away, and to inform her that "by rights" Baby Buckly's nurse and Mr. Peters should both be made to leave the hotel that very night. Sarah Walker permitted herself to be led off with dry but expressive eyes. That evening she did not cry, but, on being taken into the usual custody for disturbance, was found to be purple with suppressed laughter.

This was the beginning of my intimacy with Sarah Walker. But while it was evident that whatever influence I obtained over her was due to my being particeps criminis, I think it was accepted that a regular abduction of infants might become in time monotonous if not dangerous. So she was satisfied with the knowledge that I could not now, without the most glaring hypocrisy, obtrude a moral superiority upon her. I do not think she would have turned state's evidence and accused me, but I was by no means assured of her disinterested regard. She contented herself, for a few days afterwards, with meeting me privately and mysteriously communicating unctuous reminiscences of our joint crime, without suggesting a repetition. Her intimacy with me did not seem to interfere with her general relations to her own species in the other children in the hotel. Perhaps I should have said before that her popularity with them was by no means prejudiced by her infelix reputation. But while she was secretly admired by all, she had few professed followers and no regular associates. Whether the few whom she selected for that baleful preëminence were either torn from her by horrified guardians, or came to grief through her dangerous counsels, or whether she really did not care for them, I could not say. Their elevation was brief.

their retirement unregretted. It was however permitted me, through felicitous circumstances, to become acquainted with the probable explanation of her unsociability.

The very hot weather culminated one afternoon in a dead faint of earth and sea and sky. An Alpine cloudland of snow that had mocked the upturned eyes of Greyport for hours began to darken under the folding shadow of a black and velvety wing. The atmosphere seemed to thicken as the gloom increased; the lazy dust, thrown up by hurrying feet that sought a refuge, hung almost motionless in the air. Suddenly it was blown to the four quarters in one fierce gust that as quickly dispersed the loungers drooping in shade and cover. For a few seconds the long avenue was lost in flying clouds of dust, and then was left bare of life or motion. Raindrops in huge stars and rosettes appeared noiselessly and magically upon the sidewalks — gouts of moisture apparently dropped from mid-air. And then the ominous hush returned.

A mile away along the rocks, I turned for shelter into a cavernous passage of the overhanging cliff, where I could still watch the coming storm upon the sea. A murmur of voices presently attracted my attention. I then observed that the passage ended in a kind of open grotto, where I could dimly discern the little figures of several children, who, separated from their nurses in the sudden onset of the storm, had taken refuge there. As the gloom deepened they became silent again, until the stillness was broken by a familiar voice. There was no mistaking it, — it was Sarah Walker's. But it was not lifted in lamentation, it was raised only as if resuming a suspended narrative.

"Her name," said Sarah Walker gloomily, "was Kribbles. She was the only child — of — of orphaned parentage, and fair to see, but she was bad, and God did not love her. And one day she was separated from her nurse on a desert *island like to this.* And then came a hidgeous thunder-

storm. And a great big thunderbolt came galumping after her. And it ketched her and rolled all over her — so ! and then it came back and ketched her and rolled her over — so ! And when they came to pick her up there was not so much as *that* left of her. All burnt up ! "

" Was n't there just a little bit of her shoe ? " suggested a cautious auditor.

" Not a bit," said Sarah Walker firmly. All the other children echoed, " not a bit," indignantly, in evident gratification at the completeness of Kribbles' catastrophe. At this moment the surrounding darkness was suddenly filled with a burst of blue celestial fire ; the heavy inky sea beyond, the black-edged mourning horizon, the gleaming sands, each nook and corner of the dripping cave, with the frightened faces of the huddled group of children, started into vivid life for an instant, and then fell back with a deafening crash into the darkness.

There was a slight sound of whimpering. Sarah Walker apparently pounced upon the culprit, for it ceased.

" Snifflin' 'tracts 'lectricity," she said sententiously.

" But you thaid it wath Dod ! " lisped a casuist of seven.

" It 's all the same," said Sarah sharply, " and so 's asking questions."

This obscure statement was however apparently understood, for the casuist lapsed into silent security. " Lots of things 'tracts it," continued Sarah Walker. " Gold and silver, and metals and knives and rings."

" And pennies ? "

" And pennies most of all ! Kribbles was that vain, she used to wear jewelry and fly in the face of Providence."

" But you thaid " —

" Will you ? — There ! you hear that ? " There was another blinding flash and bounding roll of thunder along the shore. " I wonder you did n't ketch it. You would — only I 'm here."

All was quiet again, but from certain indications it was evident that a collection of those dangerous articles that had proved fatal to the unhappy Kribbles was being taken up. I could hear the clink of coins and jingle of ornaments. That Sarah herself was the custodian was presently shown.

"But won't the lightning come to you now?" asked a timid voice.

"No," said Sarah promptly, "'cause I ain't afraid! Look!"

A frightened protest from the children here ensued, but the next instant she appeared at the entrance of the grotto and ran down the rocks towards the sea. Skipping from boulder to boulder she reached the furthest projection of the ledge, now partly submerged by the rising surf, and then turned half triumphantly, half defiantly, towards the grotto. The weird phosphorescence of the storm lit up the resolute little figure standing there, gorgeously bedecked with the chains, rings, and shiny trinkets of her companions. With a tiny hand raised in mock defiance of the elements, she seemed to lean confidingly against the panting breast of the gale, with fluttering skirt and flying tresses. Then the vault behind her cracked with three jagged burning fissures, a weird flame leaped upon the sand, there was a cry of terror from the grotto, echoed by a scream of nurses on the cliff, a deluge of rain, a terrific onset from the gale — and — Sarah Walker was gone? Nothing of the kind! When I reached the ledge, after a severe struggle with the storm, I found Sarah on the leeward side, drenched but delighted. I held her tightly, while we waited for a lull to regain the cliff, and took advantage of the sympathetic situation.

"But you know you *were* frightened, Sarah," I whispered; "you thought of what happened to poor Kribbles."

"Do you know who Kribbles was?" she asked confidentially.

"*No.*"

"Well," she whispered, "I made Kribbles up. And the hidgeous storm and thunderbolt — and the burning! All out of my own head."

The only immediate effect of this escapade was apparently to precipitate and bring into notoriety the growing affection of an obscure lover of Sarah Walker's, hitherto unsuspected. He was a mild inoffensive boy of twelve, known as "Warts," solely from an inordinate exhibition of these youthful excrescences. On the day of Sarah Walker's adventure his passion culminated in a sudden and illogical attack upon Sarah's nurse and parents while they were bewailing her conduct, and in assaulting them with his feet and hands. Whether he associated them in some vague way with the cause of her momentary peril, or whether he only wished to impress her with the touching flattery of a general imitation of her style, I cannot say. For his love-making was peculiar. A day or two afterwards he came to my open door and remained for some moments bashfully looking at me. The next day I found him standing by my chair on the piazza with an embarrassed air and in utter inability to explain his conduct. At the end of a rapid walk on the sand one morning, I was startled by the sound of hurried breath, and looking around, discovered the staggering Warts quite exhausted by endeavoring to keep up with me on his short legs. At last the daily recurrence of his haunting presence forced a dreadful suspicion upon me. Warts was courting *me* for Sarah Walker! Yet it was impossible to actually connect her with these mute attentions. "You want me to give them to Sarah Walker," I said cheerfully one afternoon, as he laid upon my desk some peculiarly uninviting crustacea which looked not unlike a few detached excrescences from his own hands. He shook his head decidedly. "I understand," I continued confidently; "you want me to keep them for her." "No," said Warts doggedly. "Then you only want me to tell her how nice they

are?" The idea was apparently so shamelessly true that he blushed himself hastily into the passage, and ceased any future contribution. Naturally still more ineffective was the slightest attempt to bring his devotion into the physical presence of Sarah Walker. The most ingenious schemes to lure him into my room while she was there failed utterly. Yet he must have at one time basked in her baleful presence. "Do you like Warts?" I asked her one day bluntly. "Yes," said Sarah Walker, with cheerful directness; "ain't *he* got a lot of 'em? — though he used to have more. But," she added reflectively, "do you know the little Ilsey boy?" I was compelled to admit my ignorance. "Well!" she said, with a reminiscent sigh of satisfaction, "*he*'s got only two toes on his left foot — showed 'em to me. And he was born so." Need it be said that in these few words I read the dismal sequel of Warts' unfortunate attachment? His accidental eccentricity was no longer attractive. What were his evanescent accretions, subject to improvement or removal, beside the hereditary and settled malformations of his rival?

Once only, in this brief summer episode, did Sarah Walker attract the impulsive and general sympathy of Greyport. It is only just to her consistency to say it was through no fault of hers, unless a characteristic exposure which brought on a chill and diphtheria could be called her own act. Howbeit, towards the close of the season, when a sudden suggestion of the coming autumn had crept, one knew not how, into the heart of a perfect day; when even a return of the summer warmth had a suspicion of hectic, — on one of these days Sarah Walker was missed with the bees and the butterflies. For two days her voice had not been heard in hall or corridor, nor had the sunshine of her French marigold head lit up her familiar places. The two days were days of relief, yet mitigated with a certain uneasy apprehension of the return of Sarah Walker, or — more alarming *thought!* — the Sarah Walker element in a more appalling

form. So strong was this impression that an unhappy infant who unwittingly broke this interval with his maiden outcry was nearly lynched. "We're not going to stand that from *you*, you know," was the crystallized sentiment of a brutal bachelor. In fact, it began to be admitted that Greyport had been accustomed to Sarah Walker's ways. In the midst of this, it was suddenly whispered that Sarah Walker was lying dangerously ill, and was not expected to live.

Then occurred one of those strange revulsions of human sentiment which at first seem to point the dawning of a millennium of poetic justice, but which, in this case, ended in merely stirring the languid pulses of society into a hectic fever, and in making sympathy for Sarah Walker an insincere and exaggerated fashion. Morning and afternoon visits to her apartment, with extravagant offerings, were de rigueur; bulletins were issued three times a day; an allusion to her condition was the recognized preliminary to all conversation; advice, suggestions, and petitions to restore the baleful existence flowed readily from the same facile invention that had once proposed its banishment; until one afternoon the shadow had drawn so close that even Folly withheld its careless feet before it, and laid down its feeble tinkling bells and gaudy cap tremblingly on the threshold. But the sequel must be told in more vivid words than mine.

"Whin I saw that angel lyin' there," said Sarah Walker's nurse, "as white, if ye plaze, as if the whole blessed blood of her body had gone to make up the beautiful glory of her hair; speechless as she was, I thought I saw a sort of longin' in her eyes.

"'Is it anythin' you'll be wantin', Sarah darlint,' sez her mother with a thremblin' voice, 'afore it's lavin' us ye are? Is it the minister yer askin' for, love?' sez she.

"And Sarah looked at me, and if it was the last words I spake, her lips moved and she whispered, 'Scotty?'

"'Wirra! wirra!' sez the mother, 'it 's wanderin' she is, the darlin';' for Scotty, don't ye see, was the grand barkeeper of the hotel.

"'Savin' yer presence, ma'am,' sez I, 'and the child's here, ez is half a saint already, it 's thruth she 's spakin' — it 's Scotty she wants.' And with that my angel blinks wid her black eyes 'Yes.'

"'Bring him,' says the docthor, 'at once.'

"And they bring him in wid all the mustachios and moighty fine curls of him, and his diamonds, rings, and pins all a-glistening just like his eyes when he set 'em on that suffering saint.

"'Is it anythin' you 're wantin', Sarah dear?' sez he, thryin' to spake firm. And Sarah looks at him, and then looks at a tumbler on the table.

"'Is it a bit of a cocktail, the likes of the one I made for ye last Sunday unbeknownst?' sez he, looking round mortal afraid of the parents. And Sarah Walker's eyes said, 'It is.' Then the ministher groaned, but the docthor jumps to his feet.

"'Bring it,' sez he, 'and howld your jaw, an ye 's a Christian sowl.' And he brought it. An' afther the first sip, the child lifts herself up on one arm, and sez, with a swate smile and a toss of the glass: —

"'I looks towards you, Scotty,' sez she.

"'I observes you and bows, miss,' sez he, makin' as if he was dhrinkin' wid her.

"'Here 's another nail in yer coffin, old man,' sez she, winkin'.

"'And here 's the hair all off your head, miss,' sez he quite aisily, tossin' back the joke betwixt 'em.

"And with that she dhrinks it off, and lies down and goes to sleep like a lamb, and wakes up wid de rosy dawn in her cheeks, and the morthal seekness gone forever."

. . . . . .

Thus Sarah Walker recovered. Whether the fact were essential to the moral conveyed in these pages, I leave the reader to judge.

I was leaning on the terrace of the Kronprinzen-Hof at Rolandseck one hot summer afternoon, lazily watching the groups of tourists strolling along the road that ran between the Hof and the Rhine. There was certainly little in the place or its atmosphere to recall the Greyport episode of twenty years before, when I was suddenly startled by hearing the name of "Sarah Walker."

In the road below me were three figures, — a lady, a gentleman, and a little girl. As the latter turned towards the lady who addressed her, I recognized the unmistakable copper-colored tresses, trim figure, delicate complexion, and refined features of the friend of my youth! I seized my hat, but by the time I had reached the road, they had disappeared.

The utter impossibility of its being Sarah Walker herself, and the glaring fact that the very coincidence of name would be inconsistent with any conventional descent from the original Sarah, I admit confused me. But I examined the book of the Kronprinzen-Hof and the other hotels, and questioned my portier. There was no "Mees" nor "Madame Walkiere" extant in Rolandseck. Yet might not Monsieur have heard incorrectly? The Czara Walka was evidently Russian, and Rolandseck was a resort for Russian princes. But pardon! Did Monsieur really mean the young demoiselle now approaching? Ah! that was a different affair. She was the daughter of the Italian Prince and Princess Monte Castello staying here. The lady with her was not the Princess, but a foreign friend. The gentleman was the Prince. Would he present Monsieur's card?

They were entering the hotel. The Prince was a little, inoffensive-looking man, the lady an evident countrywoman of my own, and the child — was, yet was not, Sarah!

There was the face, the outline, the figure — but the life, the verve, the audacity, was wanting! I could contain myself no longer.

"Pardon an inquisitive compatriot, madam," I said; "but I heard you a few moments ago address this young lady by the name of a very dear young friend, whom I knew twenty years ago — Sarah Walker. Am I right?"

The Prince stopped and gazed at us both with evident affright; then suddenly recognizing in my freedom some wild American indecorum, doubtless provoked by the presence of another of my species, which he really was not expected to countenance, retreated behind the portier. The circumstance by no means increased the good will of the lady, as she replied somewhat haughtily: —

"The Principessina is named Sarah Walker, after her mother's maiden name."

"Then this *is* Sarah Walker's daughter!" I said joyfully.

"She is the daughter of the Prince and Princess of Monte Castello," corrected the lady frigidly.

"I had the pleasure of knowing her mother very well." I stopped and blushed. Did I really know Sarah Walker very well? And would Sarah Walker know me now? Or would it not be very like her to go back on me? There was certainly anything but promise in the feeble-minded, vacuous copy of Sarah before me. I was yet hesitating, when the Prince, who had possibly received some quieting assurance from the portier, himself stepped forward, stammered that the Princess would, without doubt, be charmed to receive me later, and skipped upstairs, leaving the impression on my mind that he contemplated ordering his bill at once. There was no excuse for further prolonging the interview. "Say good-by to the strange gentleman, Sarah," suggested Sarah's companion stiffly. I *looked at the child* in the wild hope of recognizing some

prompt resistance to the suggestion that would have identified her with the lost Sarah of my youth — but in vain. "Good-by, sir," said the affected little creature, dropping a mechanical curtsey. "Thank you very much for remembering my mother." "Good-by, Sarah!" It was indeed good-by forever.

For on my way to my room I came suddenly upon the Prince, in a recess of the upper hall, addressing somebody through an open door with a querulous protest, whose wild extravagance of statement was grotesquely balanced by its utter feeble timidity of manner. "It is," said the Prince, "indeed a grave affair. We have here hundreds of socialists, emissaries from lawless countries and impossible places, who travel thousands of miles to fall upon our hearts and embrace us. They establish an espionage over us; they haunt our walks in incredible numbers; they hang in droves upon our footsteps; Heaven alone saves us from a public osculation at any moment! They openly allege that they have dandled us on their knees at recent periods; washed and dressed us, and would do so still. Our happiness, our security" —

"Don't be a fool, Prince. Do shut up!"

The Prince collapsed and shrank away, and I hurried past the open door. A tall, magnificent-looking woman was standing before a glass, arranging her heavy red hair. The face, which had been impatiently turned towards the door, had changed again to profile, with a frown still visible on the bent brow. Our eyes met as I passed. The next moment the door slammed, and I had seen the last of Sarah Walker.

JOHNNYBOY

THE vast dining-room of the Crustacean Hotel at Greyport, U. S., was empty and desolate. It was so early in the morning that there was a bedroom déshabillé in the tucked-up skirts and bare legs of the little oval breakfast-tables as they had just been left by the dusting servants. The most stirring of travelers was yet abed, the most enterprising of first-train catchers had not yet come down; there was a breath of midsummer sleep still in the air; through the half-opened windows that seemed to be yawning, the pinkish blue Atlantic beyond heaved gently and slumberously, and drowsy early bathers crept into it as to bed. Yet as I entered the room I saw that one of the little tables in the corner was in reality occupied by a very small and very extraordinary child. Seated in a high-chair, attended by a dreamily abstracted nurse on one side, an utterly perfunctory negro waiter on the other, and an incongruous assortment of disregarded viands before him, he was taking — or, rather declining — his solitary breakfast. He appeared to be a pale, frail, but rather pretty boy, with a singularly pathetic combination of infant delicacy of outline and maturity of expression. His heavily fringed eyes expressed an already weary and discontented intelligence, and his willful, resolute little mouth was, I fancied, marked with lines of pain at either corner. He struck me as not only being physically dyspeptic, but as morally loathing his attendants and surroundings.

My entrance did not disturb the waiter, with whom I *had no financial* relations; he simply concealed an exagger-

ated yawn professionally behind his napkin until my own servitor should appear. The nurse slightly awoke from her abstraction, shoved the child mechanically, — as if starting up some clogged machinery, — said, "Eat your breakfast, Johnnyboy," and subsided into her dream. I think the child had at first some faint hope of me, and when my waiter appeared with my breakfast he betrayed some interest in my selection, with a view of possible later appropriation, but, as my repast was simple, that hope died out of his infant mind. Then there was a silence, broken at last by the languid voice of the nurse: —

"Try some milk, then — nice milk."

"No! No mik! Mik makes me sick — mik does!"

In spite of the hurried infantine accent the protest was so emphatic, and, above all, fraught with such pent-up reproach and disgust, that I turned about sympathetically. But Johnnyboy had already thrown down his spoon, slipped from his high-chair, and was marching out of the room as fast as his little sandals would carry him, with indignation bristling in every line of the crisp bows of his sash.

I, however, gathered from Mr. Johnson, my waiter, that the unfortunate child owned a fashionable father and mother, one or two blocks of houses in New York, and a villa at Greyport, which he consistently and intelligently despised. That he had imperiously brought his parents here on account of his health, and had demanded that he should breakfast alone in the big dining-room. That, however, he was not happy. "Nuffin peahs to agree wid him, sah, but he doan' cry, and he speaks his mind, sah; he speaks his mind."

Unfortunately, I did not keep Johnnyboy's secret, but related the scene I had witnessed to some of the lighter-hearted Crustaceans of either sex, with the result that his alliterative protest became a sort of catchword among them, and that for the next few mornings he had a large audience

of early breakfasters, who fondly hoped for a repetition of his performance. I think that Johnnyboy for the time enjoyed this companionship, yet without the least affectation or self-consciousness — so long as it was unobtrusive. It so chanced, however, that the Rev. Mr. Belcher, a gentleman with bovine lightness of touch, and a singular misunderstanding of childhood, chose to presume upon his paternal functions. Approaching the high-chair in which Johnnyboy was dyspeptically reflecting, with a ponderous wink at the other guests, and a fat thumb and forefinger on Johnnyboy's table, he leaned over him, and with slow, elephantine playfulness said : —

" And so, my dear young friend, I understand that 'mik makes you sick — mik does.' "

Anything approaching to the absolute unlikeness of this imitation of Johnnyboy's accents it is impossible to conceive. Possibly Johnnyboy felt it. But he simply lifted his lovely lashes, and said with great distinctness : —

" Mik don't — you devil ! "

After this, closely as it had knitted us together, Johnnyboy's morning presence was mysteriously withdrawn. It was later pointed out to us by Mr. Belcher, upon the veranda, that, although Wealth had its privileges, it was held in trust for the welfare of Mankind, and that the children of the Rich could not too early learn the advantages of Self-restraint and the vanity of a mere gratification of the Senses. Early and frequent morning ablutions, brisk morning toweling, half of a Graham biscuit in a teacup of milk, exercise with the dumb-bells, and a little rough-and-tumble play in a straw hat, check apron, and overalls would eventually improve that stamina necessary for his future Position, and repress a dangerous cerebral activity and tendency to give way to — He suddenly stopped, coughed, and absolutely looked embarrassed. Johnnyboy, a moving cloud of white *piqué, silk, and* embroidery, had just turned the corner of

the veranda. He did not speak, but as he passed raised his blue-veined lids to the orator. The look of ineffable scorn and superiority in those beautiful eyes surpassed anything I had ever seen. At the next veranda column he paused, and, with his baby thumbs inserted in his silk sash, again regarded him under his half-dropped lashes as if he were some curious animal, and then passed on. But Belcher was silenced for the second time.

I think I have said enough to show that Johnnyboy was hopelessly worshiped by an impressible and illogical sex. I say *hopelessly*, for he slipped equally from the proudest silken lap and the humblest one of calico, and carried his eyelashes and small aches elsewhere. I think that a secret fear of his alarming frankness, and his steady rejection of the various tempting cates they offered him, had much to do with their passion. "It won't hurt you, dear," said Miss Circe, "and it 's so awfully nice. See!" she continued, putting one of the delicacies in her own pretty mouth with every assumption of delight. "It 's *so* good!" Johnnyboy rested his elbows on her knees, and watched her with a grieved and commiserating superiority. "Bimeby, you 'll have pains in youse tommick, and you 'll be tookt to bed," he said sadly, "and then you 'll — have to dit up and" — But as it was found necessary here to repress further details, he escaped other temptation.

Two hours later, as Miss Circe was seated in the drawing-room with her usual circle of enthusiastic admirers around her, Johnnyboy — who was issued from his room for circulation, two or three times a day, as a genteel advertisement of his parents — floated into the apartment in a new dress and a serious demeanor. Sidling up to Miss Circe he laid a phial — evidently his own pet medicine — on her lap, said, "For youse tommick-ake to-night," and vanished. Yet I have reason to believe that this slight evidence of unusual remembrance on Johnnyboy's part more

than compensated for its publicity, and for a few days Miss Circe was quite "set up" by it.

It was through some sympathy of this kind that I first gained Johnnyboy's good graces. I had been presented with a small pocket-case of homœopathic medicines, and one day on the beach I took out one of the tiny phials and, dropping two or three of the still tinier pellets in my hand, swallowed them. To my embarrassment, a small hand presently grasped my trouser-leg. I looked down; it was Johnnyboy, in a new and ravishing smuggler suit, with his questioning eyes fixed on mine.

"Howjer do dat?"

"Eh?"

"Wajer do dat for?"

"That? — Oh, that's medicine. I've got a headache."

He searched the inmost depths of my soul with his wonderful eyes. Then, after a pause, he held out his baby palm.

"You kin give Johnny some."

"But you have n't got a headache — have you?"

"Me alluz has."

"Not *always!*"

He nodded his head rapidly. Then added slowly, and with great elaboration, "Et mo'nin's, et affernoons, et nights, 'nd mo'nin's adain. 'N' et becker" (that is, breakfast).

There was no doubt it was the truth. Those eyes did not seem to be in the habit of lying. After all, the medicine could not hurt him. His nurse was at a little distance gazing absently at the sea. I sat down on a bench, and dropped a few of the pellets into his palm. He ate them seriously, and then turned around and backed — after the well-known appealing fashion of childhood — against my knees. *I understood* the movement — although it was

unlike my idea of Johnnyboy. However, I raised him to my lap, — with the sensation of lifting a dozen lace-edged handkerchiefs, and with very little more effort, — where he sat silently for a moment, with his sandals crossed pensively before him.

"Would n't you like to go and play with those children?" I asked, pointing to a group of noisy sand-levelers not far away.

"No!" After a pause, "You would n't neither."

"Why?"

"Hediks."

"But," I said, "perhaps if you went and played with them and ran up and down as they do, you would n't have headache."

Johnnyboy did not answer for a moment; then there was a perceptible gentle movement of his small frame. I confess I felt brutally like Belcher. He was getting down.

Once down he faced me, lifted his frank eyes, said, "Do 'way and play den," smoothed down his smuggler frock, and rejoined his nurse.

But although Johnnyboy afterwards forgave my moral defection, he did not seem to have forgotten my practical medical ministration, and our brief interview had a surprising result. From that moment he confounded his parents and doctors by resolutely and positively refusing to take any more of their pills, tonics, or drops. Whether from a sense of loyalty to me, or whether he was not yet convinced of the efficacy of homœopathy, he did not suggest a substitute, declare his preferences, or even give his reasons, but firmly and peremptorily declined his present treatment. And, to everybody's astonishment, he did not seem a bit the worse for it.

Still he was not strong, and his continual aversion to childish sports and youthful exercise provoked the easy criticism

of that large part of humanity who are ready to confound cause and effect, and such brief moments as the Stuysdaels could spare him from their fashionable duties were made miserable to them by gratuitous suggestions and plans for their child's improvement. It was noticeable, however, that few of them were ever offered to Johnnyboy personally. He had a singularly direct way of dealing with them, and a precision of statement that was embarrassing.

One afternoon, Jack Bracy drove up to the veranda of the Crustacean with a smart buggy and spirited thoroughbred for Miss Circe's especial driving, and his own saddle-horse on which he was to accompany her. Jack had dismounted, a groom held his saddle-horse until the young lady should appear, and he himself stood at the head of the thoroughbred. As Johnnyboy, leaning against the railing, was regarding the turnout with ill-concealed disdain, Jack, in the pride of his triumph over his rivals, good humoredly offered to put him in the buggy, and allow him to take the reins. Johnnyboy did not reply.

"Come along!" continued Jack, "it will do you a heap of good! It 's better than lazing there like a girl! Rouse up, old man!"

"Me don't like that geegee," said Johnnyboy calmly. "He 's a silly fool."

"You 're afraid," said Jack.

Johnnyboy lifted his proud lashes, and toddled to the steps. Jack received him in his arms, swung him into the seat, and placed the slim yellow reins in his baby hands.

"Now you feel like a man, and not like a girl!" said Jack. "Eh, what? Oh, I beg your pardon."

For Miss Circe had appeared — had absolutely been obliged to wait a whole half minute unobserved — and now stood there a dazzling but pouting apparition. In eagerly *turning to* receive her, Jack's foot slipped on the step, and *he fell. The thoroughbred* started, gave a sickening plunge

forward, and was off! But so, too, was Jack, the next moment, on his own horse, and before Miss Circe's screams had died away.

For two blocks on Ocean Avenue, passers-by that afternoon saw a strange vision. A galloping horse careering before a light buggy, in which a small child, seated upright, was grasping the tightened reins. But so erect and composed was the little face and figure — albeit as white as its own frock — that for an instant they did not grasp its awful significance. Those further along, however, read the whole awful story in the drawn face and blazing eyes of Jack Bracy as he, at last, swung into the avenue. For Jack had the brains as well as the nerve of your true hero, and, knowing the dangerous stimulus of a stern chase to a frightened horse, had kept a side road until it branched into the avenue. So furious had been his pace, and so correct his calculation, that he ranged alongside of the runaway even as it passed, grasped the reins, and, in half a block, pulled up on even wheels.

"I never saw such pluck in a mite like that," he whispered afterwards to his anxious auditory. "He never dropped those ribbons, by G—, until I got alongside, and then he just hopped down and said, as short and cool as you please, 'Dank you!'"

"Me did n't," uttered a small voice reproachfully.

"Did n't you, dear! What *did* you say then, darling?" exclaimed a sympathizing chorus.

"Me said, 'Damn you!' Me don't like silly fool geegees. Silly fool geegees make me sick — silly fool geegees do!"

Nevertheless, in spite of this incident, the attempts at Johnnyboy's physical reformation still went on. More than that, it was argued by some complacent casuists that the pluck displayed by the child was the actual result of this somewhat heroic method of taking exercise, and not an

inherent manliness distinct from his physical tastes. So he was made to run when he did n't want to — to dance when he frankly loathed his partners — to play at games that he despised. His books and pictures were taken away; he was hurried past hoardings and theatrical posters that engaged his fancy; the public was warned against telling him fairy tales, except those constructed on strictly hygienic principles. His fastidious cleanliness was rebuked, and his best frocks taken away — albeit at a terrible sacrifice of his parents' vanity — to suit the theories of his critics. How long this might have continued is not known — for the theory and practice were suddenly arrested by another sensation.

One morning a children's picnic party was given on a rocky point only accessible at certain states of the tide, whither they were taken in a small boat under the charge of a few hotel servants, and, possibly as part of his heroic treatment, Johnnyboy, who was included in the party, was not allowed to be attended by his regular nurse. Whether this circumstance added to his general disgust of the whole affair, and his unwillingness to go, I cannot say, but it is to be regretted, since the omission deprived Johnnyboy of any impartial witness to what subsequently occurred. That he was somewhat roughly handled by several of the larger children appeared to be beyond doubt, although there was conflicting evidence as to the sequel. Enough that at noon screams were heard in the direction of certain detached rocks on the point, and the whole party proceeding thither found three of the larger boys on the rocks, alone and cut off by the tide, having been left there, as they alleged, by Johnnyboy, *who had run away with the boat.* They subsequently admitted that *they* had first taken the boat and brought Johnnyboy with them, "just to frighten him," but they adhered to the rest. And certainly Johnnyboy *and the boat* were nowhere to be found. The shore was

communicated with, the alarm was given, the telegraph, up and down the coast, trilled with excitement, other boats were manned — consternation prevailed.

But that afternoon the captain of the Saucy Jane, mackerel-fisher, lying off the point, perceived a derelict Whitehall boat drifting lazily toward the Gulf Stream. On boarding it he was chagrined to find the expected flotsam already in the possession of a very small child, who received him with a scornful reticence as regarded himself and his intentions, and some objurgation of a person or persons unknown. It was Johnnyboy. But whether he had attempted the destruction of the three other boys by "marooning" them upon the rocks, — as their parents firmly believed, — or whether he had himself withdrawn from their company simply because he did not like them, was never known. Any further attempt to improve his education by the roughing gregarious process was, however, abandoned. The very critics who had counseled it now clamored for restraint and perfect isolation. It was ably pointed out by the Rev. Mr. Belcher that the autocratic habits begotten by wealth and pampering should be restricted, and all intercourse with their possessor promptly withheld.

But the season presently passed with much of this and other criticism, and the Sluysdaels passed too, carrying Johnnyboy and his small aches and long eyelashes beyond these Crustacean voices, where it was to be hoped there was peace. I did not hear of him again for five years, and then, oddly enough, from the lips of Mr. Belcher on the deck of a transatlantic steamer, as he was being wafted to Europe for his recreation by the prayers and purses of a grateful and enduring flock. "Master John Jacob Astor Sluysdael," said Mr. Belcher, speaking slowly, with great precision of retrospect, "was taken from his private governess — I may say by my advice — and sent to an admirable school in New York, fashioned upon the English system of Eton and

Harrow, and conducted by English masters from Oxford and Cambridge. Here — I may also say at my suggestion — he was subjected to the wholesome discipline equally of his schoolmates and his masters; in fact, sir, as you are probably aware, the most perfect democracy that we have yet known, in which the mere accidents of wealth, position, luxury, effeminacy, physical degeneration, and over-civilized stimulation, are not recognized. He was put into compulsory cricket, football, and rounders. As an undersized boy he was subjected to that ingenious preparation for future mastership by the pupillary state of servitude known, I think, as 'fagging.' His physical inertia was stimulated and quickened, and his intellectual precocity repressed, from time to time, by the exuberant playfulness of his fellow students, which occasionally took the form of forced ablutions and corporal discomfort, and was called, I am told, 'hazing.' It is but fair to state that our young friend had some singular mental endowments, which, however, were promptly checked to repress the vanity and presumption that would follow." The Rev. Mr. Belcher paused, closed his eyes resignedly, and added, "Of course, you know the rest."

"Indeed, I do not," I said anxiously.

"A most deplorable affair — indeed, a most shocking incident! It was hushed up, I believe, on account of the position of his parents." He glanced furtively around, and in a lower and more impressive voice said, "I am not myself a believer in heredity, and I am not personally aware that there was a *murderer* among the Sluysdael ancestry, but it seems that this monstrous child, in some clandestine way, possessed himself of a huge bowie-knife, sir, and on one of those occasions actually rushed furiously at the larger boys — his innocent playfellows — and absolutely forced them to flee in fear of their lives. More *than that, sir, a loaded revolver* was found in his desk,

and he boldly and shamelessly avowed his intention to eviscerate, or — to use his own revolting language — 'to cut the heart out' of the first one who again 'laid a finger on him.'" He paused again, and, joining his two hands together with the fingers pointing to the deck, breathed hard and said, "His instantaneous withdrawal from the school was a matter of public necessity. He was afterwards taken, in the charge of a private tutor, to Europe, where, I trust, we shall *not* meet."

I could not resist saying cheerfully that, at least, Johnnyboy had for a short time made it lively for the big boys.

The Rev. Mr. Belcher rose slowly, but painfully, said with a deeply grieved expression, "I don't think that I entirely follow you," and moved gently away.

The changes of youth are apt to be more bewildering than those of age, and a decade scarcely perceptible in an old civilization often means utter revolution to the new. It did not seem strange to me, therefore, on meeting Jack Bracy twelve years after, to find that he had forgotten Miss Circe, or that *she* had married, and was living unhappily with a middle-aged adventurer by the name of Jason, who was reputed to have had domestic relations elsewhere. But although subjugated and exorcised, she at least was reminiscent. To my inquiries about the Sluysdaels, she answered with a slight return of her old vivacity: —

"Ah, yes, dear fellow, he was one of my greatest admirers."

"He was about four years old when you knew him, was n't he?" suggested Jason meanly. "Yes, they usually *were* young, but so kind of you to recollect them. Young Sluysdael," he continued, turning to me, "is — But of course you know that disgraceful story."

I felt that I could stand this no longer. "Yes," I said indignantly, "I know all about the school, and I don't call his conduct disgraceful either."

Jason stared. "I don't know what you mean about the school," he returned. "I am speaking of his stepfather."

"His *stepfather!*"

"Yes; his father, Van Buren Sluysdael, died, you know — a year after they left Greyport. The widow was left all the money in trust for Johnny, except about twenty-five hundred a year which he was in receipt of as a separate income, even as a boy. Well, a glib-tongued parson, a fellow by the name of Belcher, got round the widow — she was a desperate fool — and, by Jove! made her marry him. He made ducks and drakes of not only her money, but Johnny's too, and had to skip to Spain to avoid the trustees. And Johnny — for the Sluysdaels are all fools or lunatics — made over his whole separate income to that wretched, fashionable fool of a mother, and went into a stockbroker's office as a clerk."

"And walks to business before eight every morning, and they say even takes down the shutters and sweeps out," broke in Circe impulsively. "Works like a slave all day, wears out his old clothes, has given up his clubs and amusements, and shuns society."

"But how about his health?" I asked. "Is he better and stronger?"

"I don't know," said Circe, "but he *looks* as beautiful as Endymion."

. . . . . .

At his bank, in Wall Street, Bracy that afternoon confirmed all that Jason had told me of young Sluysdael. "But his temper?" I asked. "You remember his temper — surely."

"He's as sweet as a lamb, never quarrels, never whines, never alludes to his lost fortune, and is never put out. For a youngster, he's the most popular man in the street. Shall we nip round and see him?"

"*By all* means."

"Come. It is n't far."

A few steps down the crowded street we dived into a den of plate-glass windows, of scraps of paper, of rattling, ticking machines, more voluble and excited than the careworn, abstracted men who leaned over them. But "Johnnyboy" — I started at the familiar name again — was not there. He was at luncheon.

"Let us join him," I said, as we gained the street again and turned mechanically into Delmonico's.

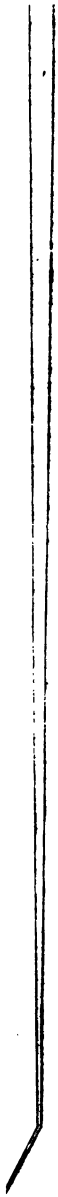
"Not there," said Bracy, with a laugh. "You forget! That's not Johnnyboy's gait just now. Come here." He was descending a few steps that led to a humble cake-shop. As we entered I noticed a young fellow standing before the plain wooden counter, with a cake of gingerbread in one hand and a glass of milk in the other. His profile was before me; I at once recognized the long lashes. But the happy, boyish, careless laugh that greeted Bracy, as he presented me, was a revelation.

Yet he was pleased to remember me. And then — it may have been embarrassment that led me to such tactlessness, but as I glanced at him and the glass of milk he was holding, I could not help reminding him of the first words I had ever heard him utter.

He tossed off the glass, colored slightly, as I thought, and said with a light laugh: —

"I suppose I have changed a good deal since then, sir."

I looked at his demure and resolute mouth, and wondered if he had.



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